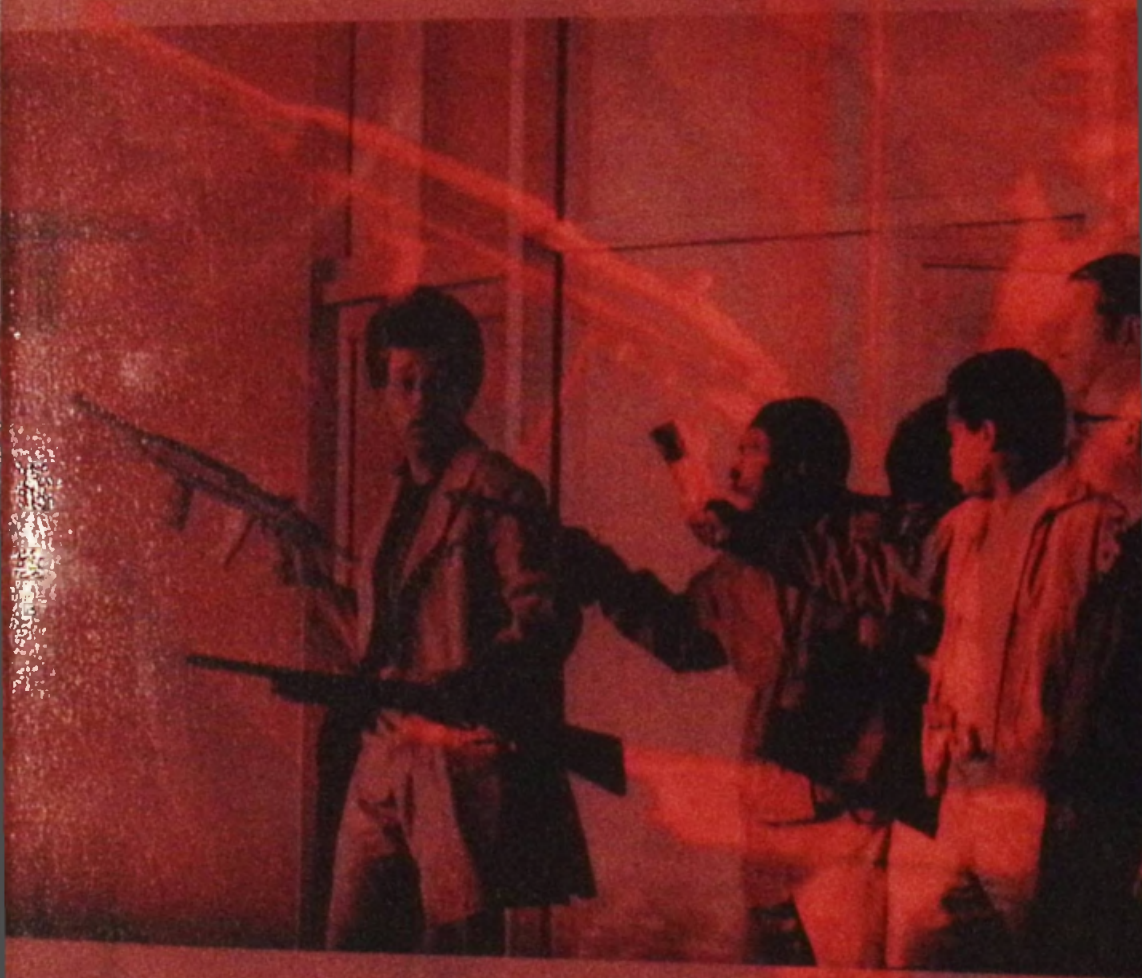


Armed Struggle?



**Panthers and Communists;
Black Nationalists and Liberals
in Southern California
through the Sixties and Seventies**

by Gerald Horne

Armed Struggle?

**Panthers and Communists;
Black Nationalists and Liberals
In Southern California
Through the
Sixties and Seventies**

By Gerald Horne



INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHERS, New York

Table of Contents

Introduction:		1-33
Chapter 1:	The Wild West, 1850-1935	34-56
Chapter 2:	Red Advance Fuels Black Liberation, 1935-World War II	57-79
Chapter 3:	Red Scare Rising, 1942-1949	80-106
Chapter 4:	Communists on Trial, 1945-1952	107-133
Chapter 5:	Communists on Trial, Part II, 1951-1958	134-159
Chapter 6:	Communists Purged by Liberals & the Right Wing, 1951-1962	160-187
Chapter 7:	Prelude to Panthers, 1960-1966	188-215
Chapter 8:	Panthers Roar, 1964-1966	216-244
Chapter 9:	Armed Propaganda? 1964-1969	245-274
Chapter 10:	Raiding Armories for Armed Struggle, 1967-1968	275-305
Chapter 11:	"They're Shooting Back," 1969	306-338
Chapter 12:	Armed Struggle? 1969-1972	339-370
Chapter 13:	Armed Self-Defense! 1969-1972	371-404

Chapter 14:	The Afro-American Liberation Army? 1970-1973	405-438
Chapter 15:	"Free Angela!" 1968-1972	439-473
Chapter 16:	Armed Struggle! 1970-1972	474-506
Chapter 17:	The Mass Movement—Globally—Prevails, 1970-1973	507-537
Chapter 18:	Skyjacking, 1971-1980	538-568
Chapter 19:	Black Guerrilla Family, 1971-2002	569-602
Epilogue:	The Struggle Continues, 1989-2024	603-606
Abbreviations:		609-614
Bibliography:		617-630
Index:		632-687
About the Author:		689

Armed Struggle?

Introduction

It was June 1971 in Algiers, the intriguing Mediterranean city in North Africa featuring a plethora of whitewashed buildings—then the site of the major international legation of the Black Panther Party, headquartered in California. It was in Algeria where party leaders Kathleen Neal Cleaver and Donald Cox were to be found conferring with a diplomat from the embassy of then socialist Czechoslovakia. The readout was explicit: the U.S. militants were seeking a cache of “model 61 automatic machine pistol[s]...ideally suited to the conditions of our struggle in the urban areas”; also desired were “silencer[s].” These Panthers had been “informed” that the diplomat’s “government supported the liberation struggles of all peoples”—so, why not back that in the citadel of imperialism? They were told “they would do whatever they could to aid us....”¹ Fellow exiled Panther Pete O’Neal, originally of Kansas City, recalled that the “North Vietnamese embassy” in Algiers also “gave us money and some guns....”²

1. Report, 21 June 1971, Box 1, Eldridge Cleaver Archives, Texas A&M University (abbrev. Cleaver-TAMU). See also Elaine Mokhtefi, *Algiers, Third World Capital: Freedom Fighters, Revolutionaries, Black Panthers*, New York: Verso, 2018. According to then BPP leader, Elaine Brown, by the 1970s in the vicinity of Oakland they had “literally thousands of weapons...large numbers of AR-18 and AR-18-short automatic rifles, .308 scoped rifles, 3030 Winchesters, .375 Magnum...30 caliber Garands, M-15s and M-16s...submachine guns, M-59 Santa Fe Troopers...anti-tank guns...innumerable shotguns...grenade launchers...suitcases, trunkloads, closets full of pistols...boxes and boxes of ammunition...crossbows and arrows, grenades....” She added that by August 1974 her party was “the only armed revolutionary organization operating” in the U.S. By then, she said, the Southern California chapter which “warehoused large arsenals” was “completely underground....” Elaine Brown, *A Taste of Power: A Black Woman's Story*, New York: Pantheon, 1992, 13. See also Safiya Bukhari, *The War Before: The True Life Story of Becoming a Black Panther, Keeping the Faith in Prison and Fighting for Those Left Behind*, New York: Feminist Press, 2010; Ashley Farmer, *Remaking Black Power: How Black Women Transformed an Era*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017; Robyn Spencer, *The Revolution Has Come: Black Power, Gender and The Black Panther Party in Oakland*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2016. Bobby Seale, *A Lonely Rage*, New York: Times, 1978, 177: The “majority in the party, sixty percent, were sisters.” See also M. Aziz, “Vanguard of the Athletic Revolution: The Black Panther Party, Micki and Jack Scott and the Sports Liberation Movement,” *American Quarterly*, 75 (No. 3, September 2023): 655-672, 657: “Martial arts and hand-to-hand combat” were part of the Panther arsenal also. Reputedly, BPP leader Eldridge Cleaver possessed a rocket launcher: “Respondent’s Brief on the Merits,” ca. 1979, Box 7, David Bernstein Papers-UCLA. Neal Cleaver had knocked on the proper door. See Tom Lodge, *Red Road to Freedom: A History of the South African Communist Party, 1921-2021*, Rochester: Boydell & Brewer, 2022, 320: By 1963 the Prague comrades were providing to South Africa Communists “three tons of plastic explosives, 10,000 detonators, 500 machine guns, 2000 automatic rifles and military training.” Obviously, this calls into question the BPP’s often unequivocal—and public—berating of Eastern European comrades. Still, some Southland comrades have suggested that the amount of weaponry controlled by the Panthers was overstated by the authorities in order to justify repression of them, while the party overstated it in order to burnish their image. Cf. Steve Coll, *The Achilles Trap: Saddam Hussein, the CIA and the Origins of America's Invasion of Iraq*, New York: Penguin, 2024.

2. Paul J. Magnarella, *Black Panther in Exile: The Pete O’Neal Story*, Tallahassee: University Press of Florida, 2020, 109. See also *San Francisco Examiner & Chronicle*, 4 December 1977: Mary

Months earlier, the party's paramount leader, Huey P. Newton was quoted for the proposition that "we intend to overthrow the United States government by force and violence—armed struggle is the only way...ours is a war of liberation."³ This was seen as a logical step from the inchoate urban revolts: indeed, the Panthers argued for a move "from riots to armed struggle,"⁴ which was also a reaction to perceived limitations of non-violence.⁵

To be fair, oppressed peoples globally had arrived at a similar conclusion. Cai Chang, Chinese Communist revolutionary, said as much as her party was arriving in power: "Armed struggle," she said, "is at present the characteristic feature."⁶ planetarily. The problem in the U.S. was an assessment of the correlation of forces domestically and globally in light of the perniciousness of class collaboration that inhered in settler colonialism at home, a point that even the wisest rarely engaged.

Nonetheless, the Black comrades in particular were deadly serious about this initiative. Johnny Spain, who served hard time in California prisons, reflected this

Daugherty, depicted as the daughter of a former Texas governor, donated tens of thousands of dollars to the Panthers, often used to purchase weapons.

3. *San Jose Mercury News*, 6 December 1970. See also Joshua Bloom and Waldo E. Martin, Jr., *Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016. See also Daniel S. Chard, *Nixon's War at Home: The FBI, Leftist Guerrillas and the Origins of Counterterrorism*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021, 45. On 20 July 1967, Newton "outlined his vision for a clandestine revolutionary guerrilla organization in the United States...a response to the Newark uprising." Cf. Louise Thompson Patterson quoted in Walt Thompson, "What's Left of the Black Left," n.d., Reel 14, Black Panther Documents-Texas A&M University, College Station (abbrev. Black Panther Documents): "The slogan 'power comes out of the barrel of a gun' is a suicidal one...." Cf. Nico Slate, "The Geography of Non-Violence: The United Nations, the Highlander Folk School and the Borders of the Civil Rights Movement," *American Historical Review*, 127 (No. 4, December 2022): 1659-1686, 1664; Even the now sainted M.K. Gandhi "did not oppose violence in all cases." Of course, violence directed at the enslaved had been met with violence in turn: See e.g., W.E.B. Du Bois, *John Brown*, New York: International, 2021, and Herbert Aptheker, *American Negro Slave Revolts*, New York: International, 2021. Cf. Kellie Carter Jackson, *Force and Freedom: Black Abolitionists and the Politics of Violence*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020. See also Daniel Immerwahr, "Burning Down the House: Slavery and Arson in America," *Journal of American History*, 110 (No. 3, December 2023): 449-473. Naturally, resistance to the onslaught of settler colonialism, not least in the captive nation that was Hawaii, was fierce: See e.g., Ernest Andrade, *Unconquerable Rebel: Robert W. Wilcox and Hawaiian Politics, 1880-1903*, Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1996.

4. *The Black Panther*, 8 August 1970.

5. *Washington Post*, 7 August 2023, Professor Anthea Butler of the University of Pennsylvania says of passive resistance: "No one likes that. It doesn't feel like it works because look where we are." Says Mandisa Thomas, an Atlanta intellectual: "The Black Church hijacked the civil rights movement...[do not] inflate the role of the Black Church." See e.g., Gerald Horne, *Red Seas: Ferdinand Smith and Radical Black Sailors in the U.S. and Jamaica*, New York: New York University Press, 2005: During the Red Scare, the sabotage of left-led unions, especially those led by Blacks, created a vacuum filled by clerics.

6. Elisabeth B. Armstrong, *Bury the Corpse of Colonialism: The Revolutionary Feminist Conference of 1949*, Oakland: University of California Press, 2023, 44. See also Akinyele Omowale Umoja, *We Will Shoot Back: Armed Resistance in the Mississippi Freedom Movement*, New York: New York University Press, 2013.

steeliness in his will that had the Panthers 'Elaine Brown as executrix: All assets were to go to the Panthers "of which I belong.... I wish to be dressed in guerrilla fatigues" when buried, and dressed in a "beret, combat boots, an assault carbine with one round in it"—just in case—"I want to be holding the carbine" with "no smile on my face."⁷

This was not the first time that besieged radicals in the U.S. had sought military aid from abroad, though admittedly the pace of such calls accelerated precisely when Jim Crow's retreat created more room for irregular military conflict to redress past and ongoing horrors.

Thus, it was, in 1952, that the leadership of the Communist Party of California were on trial in Los Angeles on charges of violating the notorious Smith Act, a prototypical "thought" crime, where the gravamen of the case was precisely their professing Marxism-Leninism and socialism. Yet the prosecutors begged to differ, and bolstering their point was the appearance in the courtroom of what an onlooker described as a "heavysset keen-eyed Negro," Leonard Patterson. He "electrified" those assembled, it was said, when he described U.S. Communists in Moscow at the Lenin School in the 1930s studying the "techniques of street fighting," including "overturning streetcars, throwing grenades" and "rifle practice." The testimony, according to the satisfied reporter, "came as a severe shock to the defense," including defendant Loretta Stack, who "fidgeted and muttered" in anxiety, discombobulating this otherwise "attractive, innocent looking woman."⁸ According to Patterson, this was not a theoretical exercise, as Stack—then known as Lottie Keith—was to lose a spouse to combat during the epochal Spanish Civil War. He went on to describe the lost art of "overturning cars, buses, streetcars" and "using them as barricades" and concocting "Molotov cocktails"—firebombs—"as a means of slowing up...tanks." Naturally, "bayonetting" skills were taught, as well as how to "field strip a machine gun."⁹

7. Spain will, 8 January 1974, Reel 30, Black Panther Documents, Texas A&M University. Cf. Spain from Soledad prison to State Senator Mervyn Dymally, 1 January 1971, Box 108, Mervyn Dymally Papers, California State University-Los Angeles (abbrev. Mervyn Dymally Papers): Raised in Watts, he found that "Prison is inevitable for Black youth, especially the ones that have any aggressiveness about them... 'justice' is alien to California (and the USA) power elite... passivity is self-destructing in the California Prison System... an offensive may be necessary to bring this madness to a cessation... henceforth, I'm willing to test the oppressor's reactionary brute strength against that of tactical revolutionary action. The latter may call for the ultimate in life, life itself, but Sir: death is also freedom... freedom is Life! Power to the People!" Dymally to Spain, 22 January 1971, same box: "Your statement that you would not hesitate to take your own life as a weapon against the nation... we need all the minority groups to work together."

8. *Fortnight*, 28 April 1952, Box 1, Trial Records of William Schneiderman, UCLA (abbrev. Schneiderman Trial Records).

9. Transcript, 18 April 1952, Box 1341, Record Group 21, Records of the District Court of the U.S. for the Southern District of California, Central Division... Criminal Case 21883, U.S.A. v. Schneiderman, et al., National Archives and Records Administration, Riverside, Calif. [abbrev. NARA-Riverside].

This testimony was seen as quite damaging by the defendants' counsel. Norman Leonard noted ruefully that the prosecution deployed the misleading "formula" that "ML equals FV"—Marxism-Leninism means Force and Violence.¹⁰

Taking the cue, it was in 1932 that the idea was bruited that the Young Communist League in Los Angeles should become—in the words of Communist leader Ben Dobbs—a "semi-military organization, go out for military training, have uniforms," a response to "fascist gangs that were arising in Germany."¹¹

Southern California radicals did not always go abroad in order to imbibe the fungible talents of disruption. J.B. McNamara was convicted of bombing the offices of the then reactionary *Los Angeles Times*, when an estimated 20 individuals were killed. This was not unusual. From 1906 to 1910 "terrorists"—who often adopted the label proudly—struck more than 200 construction sites as buildings and bridges erected by non-union labor were detonated within days of completion. By 1924 the still imprisoned McNamara indicated a link to the radicals then emerging: "I was sorry to see Lenin go," he said in 1924, speaking of the deceased founder of the Soviet Union.¹²

As the title and the foregoing suggest, this is a book about—primarily—Southern California, the vast region stretching from Santa Barbara to the Mexican border and from the Pacific Ocean to the outskirts of Nevada and Arizona. Admittedly, the cornerstone is Los Angeles, city and county. The focus is on—primarily—Panthers and Communists, for as detailed below, I have found that it is difficult to comprehend the former without contemplating the latter. As shall be seen, there was cross-fertilization between the two, not to mention their linkages with the NAACP and other liberals and the forces tied to the influential figure now known as Maulana Karenga. Although "armed struggle" is highlighted, this book is not solely about this fraught topic. It is, however, a framing device that serves to illuminate still regnant ideological cleavages. In many ways, this book tracks my earlier book about racism and radicalism in Washington, D.C.,¹³ with these two powerful forces also highlighted in the book at hand. And, yes, a lesson of this book is that in the future—if the national climate continues to deteriorate and the ultra-right seeks to block democratic change—"armed struggle" should not only incorporate an arsenal of various sorts but, similarly important, an analysis, to wit, the driving forces undergirding U.S. reaction, including genocide against the Indigenous and mass enslavement of Africans and deep-seated class

10. Norman Leonard, Oral History, 1985, UCB (abbrev. Norman Leonard, Oral History).

11. Ben Dobbs, Oral History, 1987, UCLA (abbrev. Ben Dobbs, Oral History).

12. Lew Irwin, *Deadly Times: The 1910 Bombing of the Los Angeles Times and America's Forgotten Decade of Terror*, Guilford, Conn.: Lyons, 2013, xi, 335.

13. Gerald Home, *Revolting Capital: Racism & Radicalism in Washington, D.C., 1900-2000*, New York: International, 2023.

collaboration, especially among the settlers and their descendants;¹⁴ and taking seriously the counter-revolutionary essence of this republic.¹⁵

It is true that the Panthers did seek to fulfill one key requirement of launching armed struggle: As the meeting in Algiers exemplifies, they did seek allies abroad. The exiled Panther William Lee Brent, who resided in Cuba from 1969 until his death at the age of 75 in 2006, recalled that a steady stream of Black Americans arrived on the island thinking that "Cuba would train them in guerrilla warfare, arm them and sneak them back into the United States to engage in armed struggle."¹⁶ (At the time, Imari Obadele estimated that there were "potential underground guerrillas" in over 120 U.S. cities by 1968.)¹⁷ Not unrelated was the point that from 1971 to 1974 the Black Liberation Army, which in some ways had sprouted from the BPP, reportedly killed at least 8 cops from New York to San Francisco and wounded more than a dozen. Likewise, from the Fall of 1968 the BPP grew from a few chapters to more than 40—and during the first half of 1969 at least ten armed raids were launched against the party and hundreds were arrested. In the streets comrades chanted, "Revolution has come! Off the pigs! Time to pick up the gun! Off the pigs!" All told, during this era of tumult from 1971-1972, there were 2500 bombings, 1900 in 1972 alone by various forces, while minimally about two dozen Panthers were slain by cops during its history.¹⁸

14. Gerald Home, *The Counter-Revolution of 1836: Texas Slavery & Jim Crow and the Roots of U.S. Fascism*, New York: International, 2022. This work also contains an elaboration of armed struggle among the Indigenous—particularly the Comanches.

15. Gerald Home, *The Counter-Revolution of 1776: Slave Resistance and the Roots of the USA*, New York: New York University Press, 2014.

16. William Lee Brent, *Long Time Gone*, New York: Times Books, 1996, 234.

17. Imari Obadele, *Revolution and Nation-Building: Strategy for Building the Black Nation in America*, Detroit: House of Songhay, 1970, 29. See *Collected Works of the Black Liberation Army*, Vol. I, Brooklyn?, Rookery, 2023, 320: RNA "reached its peak by 1972." Cf. *San Francisco Examiner*, 9 December 1973: Oakland copter crash killing two cops, "one with a bullet in his head...alleged sniper was probably 500 feet below." *San Francisco Examiner*, 17 September 1973: "Black Guerrilla Family" claims credit for this downing and demands release of erstwhile Panther known as Geronimo Pratt who—it was said—is "linked" to the BGE. See also Donald Cox to Axelrod, 3 March 1994, Box 7, Beverly Axelrod Papers-University of Delaware (abbrev. Beverly Axelrod Papers): Philadelphia Panthers "got their hands on some hand grenades" and "Sister Barbara...brought some to me in San Francisco. I took the grenades to headquarters to re-enforce defense capabilities" and then he "started hearing news reports of a police chase in the streets of Oakland...[comrades were] throwing hand grenades, blowing up police cars and storefronts...."

18. Chard, *Nixon's War*, 5, 16, 275. Cf. Jeremy Varon, *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004, 339: The "conventional view," says this scholar, is that the BLA sprouted from the Newton-Cleaver split in the BPP, with "those on the West Coast" (excluding LA)—revealingly and tellingly—"following Newton" away from the armed struggle touted by Cleaver. The scholar Akinyele Omojale Umoja points to "armed self-defense units" antedating the BLA, which one can find evidence for in these pages, e.g., "Deacons for Defense" in Louisiana. Then there is the argument in favor of the Revolutionary Action Movement "in the mid and late 1960s" operating in armed fashion "independent" of the BPP. And then Russell Shoats contends that the BLA was "ordered into existence by the BPP leadership in 1969, but that Newton and the

To that end, the White House was displeased when news emerged from Algiers that the Panthers were in a "close relationship" with Palestinian militants—Eldridge Cleaver, a "close friend of the Fatah representative" in Algeria, being the "principal point of contact." The bumptious Cleaver was spotted addressing a Fatah confab, and premier leader Yasir Arafat "appeared in public" with him and had "offered to train Panther members at its bases in Jordan." Cleaver was invited there for an inspection tour. By August 1970 four Panthers arranged to "spend a month observing" operations there, with the Palestinians hoping to "develop Blacks in the [U.S.] as a propaganda base."¹⁹ The loose-lipped Cleaver informed the world that "Our Party also has underground aspects. There are some Black Panther members no one knows about. The Los Angeles leader, Geronimo, a Vietnam Veteran...."²⁰

More circumspect was Panther Sekou Odinga. According to his comrade Donald Cox, he "served as an international diplomat when he was based in Algeria...people from Algiers to Cairo, Beirut, Kuwait and all the way to the Cape in South Africa that either know or heard of Sekou," especially when he was "welcoming Oliver Tambo"—Nelson Mandela's closest comrade—to Algiers or being photographed alongside Yasir Arafat, Palestinian leader.²¹

* * *

In July 1972 a young law student in Berkeley, California, wrote "Dear Ericka," speaking of Ms. Huggins, a Panther leader. He was seeking to enlist her in supporting an "event...dedicated to prisoners across the land." The tall, stately Panther was favorably disposed and scribbled on the letter that "Jerry Horn" [a reference to this author] worked with [D'Army] Bailey," a then member of the

Oakland Panthers quickly turned on key BLA leaders." One could also add that as the right wing armed and re-armed, their intended victims saw no alternative but to do so. See *Los Angeles Free Press*, 8 September 1972: Ultra-rightist "Secret Army Organization...preparing for guerrilla warfare...face[s] terrorism charges...." Newton admits influence from the Deacons: "one of their leaders had come through the Bay Area on a speaking and fundraising tour and we liked what he said"—except his "calling upon" the federal government for aid. See Huey P. Newton, *Revolutionary Suicide*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973, 112. See also Clipping, 5 May 1972, Reel 24, Black Panther Documents: Estimated membership of Black Liberation Army: 200. Cf. *New York Daily News*, 3 May 1973: Lengthy stories on Assata Shakur and Black Liberation Army.

19. Tom Charles Huston to Leonard Garment, 14 August 1970, Box 50, White House Central Files, Leonard Garment Files, Richard Nixon Presidential Library, Yorba Linda, Calif. (abbrev. RNPL).

20. *New York Times*, 1 November 1970. See also "Functional Structure" of BPP, ca. 1970, Reel 54, Black Panther Documents: "Field Marshals...underground."

21. Donald Cox on Odinga, 7 March 1994, Box 7, Beverly Axelrod Papers.

Berkeley City Council," on the rent control proposal,"²² which happened to be accurate.

In sum, I first visited Berkeley in 1969 for an anti-fascist conference sponsored by the Panthers and then returned in 1970 as a law student at the sprawling University of California campus. I worked alongside the Panthers, read their well-circulated newspaper regularly, collaborated with them on various projects, taught them at the prison at Vacaville, due north of the campus. There I lent my prized copy of Friedrich Engels's *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State* to an inmate then known as Donald De Freeze, who never returned it—he perished in May 1974 during the midst of a shootout between his "Symbionese Liberation Army" and the authorities. I knew Steve Weed from Princeton, the fiancé of heiress Patty Hearst whom the SLA kidnapped and allegedly brainwashed. I was present when the young scholar Angela Davis had a celebratory party marking her acquittal in 1972 on criminal charges that could have meant the death penalty. I knew her attorney, Howard Moore, and was a classmate of his spouse, Jane Bond Moore. Consonant with the zeitgeist, it was while residing in Berkeley that I became familiar with shotguns, including skeet shooting—though I had not picked up a gun previously and never did again after departing California. Likewise, it was during that time that I was introduced to the precepts of dialectical materialism and socialism and began a half-century-long association with the Communist Party, which encompassed (inter alia) the publication of a number of books.

In other words, it is not only the thousands of footnotes in this study that have informed my analysis, it is also my experience with struggle and knowledge of many of the principals in these pages.

In short, my actions were consistent with those of a number of Panthers. Understandably, the Panthers have been viewed retrospectively—by some—as an emblem of the "Black Power" trend which emerged as Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale, founders, were catapulted into prominence.²³ More precisely, the Panthers were a "halfway house" between Black Power and the then tormented Communist Party, an ally of the soon to be extinguished Soviet Union. In an anticipatory

22. Gerald Home to "Dear Ericka," [including scribble] ca. July 1972, Reel 16, Black Panther Documents. For more on the BPP relationship to the National Conference of Black Lawyers which I once headed, see Reel 32 in this collection. See also Jo Nina Abron, editor, BPP organ, to Gerald Home, 23 August 1979, Reel 30, Black Panther Documents: "I was unaware of the *Fuillilove v. Kreps* case" and thus was "most pleased to sign" Amicus Brief to U.S. Supreme Court coordinated by the Affirmative Action Coordinating Center, which I then led. See also D'Army Bailey Recall, 1972-1973, in Vertical File-Black Panthers, African-American Museum and Library at Oakland (abbrev. AAMLO): I worked for this Berkeley City Councilman.

23. Jeffrey O.G. Ogbar, *Black Power: Radical Politics and African American Identity*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004; Peniel Joseph, *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights-Black Power Era*, New York: Routledge, 2006. Overwhelmingly, when I discuss the Black Panthers in these pages, I am referring to the Oakland-based formation led by Newton, as opposed to other groups who—at times—carried this name.

rebutal of 21st-century scholars, BPP leaders "Masai" Hewitt and Eldridge Cleaver were asked, "you are being lumped together with the various Cultural Nationalists—the Le Roy [sic] Joneses, the Karengas, the Muslims," and Cleaver responded contemptuously: "For a Black man it is far more important to read Marx rather than learn Swahili." His unfortunate dismissal of foreign language competence aside, Cleaver had a point in that grouping him alongside adversaries has been a 21st-century scholarly conceit,²⁴ an attempt to forge a unity retrospectively that did not exist—while sidelining continuously disparaged socialists. (More reflective of the BPP's ideological *cum* intellectual approach were the October 1967 words of the imprisoned George Jackson: "I am presently working on Spanish and Swahili...I'll go into Arabic next.")²⁵ The ministrations of current scholarship notwithstanding, the BPP journal carried a full page attack in mid-1969 on "Black Power" and its epigone, then known as Stokely Carmichael, and pointed the finger of accusation at his alma mater, Howard University, and their C.I.A.-sponsored "roundtable" on African liberation.²⁶

More to the point, the Panthers were also a halfway house between the Islamic trend that had gathered steam in the 1960s and the CP, reflecting both. A major character in these pages, Cleaver, as shall be seen, reflected this in his sojourn with the Nation of Islam, then assimilating a kind of Marxism. He was not alone. Lumumba Shakur of the infamous Panther 21 trial in Manhattan recalled that "of the brothers in solitary confinement" in prison—often the most rebellious of the incarcerated—"99 percent were in there for teaching Islam or nationalism to other inmates."²⁷

In some ways, as Communists were forced into retreat, the Panthers arose to fill the vacuum, at least among African Americans. William Schneiderman, the lead defendant in the L.A. trial, later said in wonderment that by the Summer of 1952 there were Smith Act trials in 14 cities with 140 defendants, as the state moved to jail, exile or simply tie up Communists in a snarl of litigation.²⁸ This was coupled with the destabilization and dirty tricks campaign of the FBI—COINTELPRO—which wounded not only the Panthers but also the mainstream civil rights movement. Yet, according to CP counsel John Abt, his client was the target of 1388 of 2370 official acts of this program, and the authorities crusade "lasted longest—fifteen years," against them from about 1956 to 1971.²⁹ A

24. *The Black Panther*, 31 May 1969.

25. Remarks, October 1967, George Jackson, *Soledad Brother: The Prison Letters of George Jackson*, Chicago: Lawrence Hill, 1994, 140.

26. *The Black Panther*, 7 June 1969.

27. Remarks of Lumumba Shakur in *Look for Me in the Whirlwind: The Collective Autobiography of the New York 21*, New York: Random House, 1973, 240-246, 244.

28. William Schneiderman, *Dissent on Trial: The Story of a Political Life*, Minneapolis: MEP, 1983, 178.

29. John Abt with Michael Myerson, *Advocate and Activist: Memoirs of an American Communist Lawyer*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995, 282. See also the curious case of Jay Kennedy,

purpose was to invalidate Marxism as a mode of thought or, minimally, force a retreat of this ideology and compel doubters of the alleged munificence of capitalism to profess liberalism instead. This was not altogether unsuccessful.

Thus, it would be an error to ignore this latter influence upon the Panthers. It was hardly coincidental that Jonathan Jackson, whose armed assault on a courtroom in Marin County, Calif., in August 1970 led to the trial of Angela Davis, edited a high school newspaper entitled *Iskra*—homage to the publication of the same name edited pre-1917 by none other than V.I. Lenin himself. As late as mid-June 1970 he was still at the controls.³⁰ It was in April 1971—a few months before his suspicious killing—that his brother, the imprisoned George Jackson, a Field Marshal of the Panthers, informed Communist intellectual, Herbert Aptheker, that among his goals was “giving Communism a black face,”³¹ adding, “I am of course a student of Marx,” though his ambition was that “Socialism” be seen as a “Black Thing.” He stressed, “I’ve made many Black Communist guerrillas”—and “I was forced to emphasize that it was the Black Thing to do.”³² He was following his leader in that as late as 1976 when it was thought widely that the bludgeoned Panthers were making their peace with the state, Huey P. Newton asserted adamantly that “our political goals...are socialist...we think socialism is necessary.”³³ This bold assertion serves to explicate why at one juncture J. Edgar Hoover of the FBI was said to refer to the handsome and muscled Oaklander as “the most dangerous man in America,” with his Panthers dubbed as the “most dangerous force.”³⁴ This was said at a time when—according to one scholar—there were about 2000 Panthers in almost 30 chapters.³⁵ But a truer estimate of

born Samuel Richard Solomonick, author, screenwriter, record executive, publisher, therapist—and FBI spy—who became associated with Harry Belafonte, actor and activist, and with Frank Sinatra, and Stanley Levison, an advisor to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. His intimate association with Panther leader Elaine Brown was viewed suspiciously by many. See e.g., Brown, *A Taste of Power*, 175. See also Harry Belafonte, *My Song: A Memoir*, New York: Knopf, 2011, 135-139, 174, 283.

30. “Iskra,” 18 June 1970, Box 101, John Thorne Papers. UC Santa Cruz (abbrev. Thorne Papers). “Iskra” is the Russian word for “spark.” See also Report from Donald Cox, 12 April 1994, Box 7, Beverly Axelrod Papers: The apparent attempt to free defendants evidently had been raised previously. When Newton faced criminal charges in 1968, Beverly Axelrod—who had been close to Eldridge Cleaver—“telephoned” Panther Donald Cox and arranged, he said, a “rendezvous on the Cal campus in Berkeley. When I arrived, Beverly told me that Huey wanted me to break him out...if the operation had not been canceled because of Charles Garry’s confidence that he could get Huey out, Beverly would have been on the front line and the only person that could have been identified. Beverly never showed concern about that.”

31. George Jackson to Herbert Aptheker, 25 April 1971, Series 2, Box 44, Huey P. Newton Foundation Records, Stanford University, Palo Alto, Calif. (abbrev. Newton Foundation).

32. George Jackson to Herbert Aptheker, 4 May 1971, Series 2, Box 44, Newton Foundation.

33. Interview with Huey P. Newton, *The Black Panther*, 18 February 1976. The rebellious Newton recounted how he was “suspended from school approximately 38 times.” See Newton, *Playboy* Interview, ca. 1973, Black Panther Documents.

34. Cited by Mark Lane in Interview with Newton, 17 September 1970, Reel 15, Black Panther Documents.

35. Magnarella, *Black Panther in Exile*, 80.

the reach of the BPP can be gleaned from the point that by the late 1960s, their newspaper's circulation may have amounted to 200,000 sold weekly—which, according to Eldridge Cleaver's biographer—"became the main economic engine of the party."³⁶

Seed money for the Panthers' ambitious plans was accumulated by buying Mao Zedong's *Little Red Book* for 30 cents and selling it for \$1 at the entrance to the Berkeley campus—then gaining \$170 and reputedly buying weapons.³⁷ The importance of this Chinese tome was signaled when the Panther known as Alprentice "Bunchy" Carter, funeralized after his tragic slaying on the UCLA campus in January 1969, was buried with this book.³⁸

The slayings of Panthers at UCLA in January 1969 was a staggering blow to the party, placing them on a downward trajectory in the Southland that was difficult to reverse. According to their leader, "Masai" Hewitt, "More Panthers have been shot in Southern California than anywhere,"³⁹ an aspect of the pre-existing "Wild West" atmosphere—Panthers called L.A. "Dodge City"⁴⁰—shaping the fiery ideological conflicts and the stakes at play. A recent study found that "No Panther branch or chapter experienced more harassment and suffered more casualties than the L.A. Panthers...being a Panther in Los Angeles meant putting one's [life] in peril on a daily basis." Thus, during the infamous December 1969 assault on the Panthers headquarters there, the mayor contacted the U.S. Secretary of the Army requesting reinforcements.⁴¹ This bespeaks a point made in my book on the Watts Revolt of 1965:⁴² The authorities perceived that their police force was insufficient numerically to cover a sprawling region⁴³—so the remedy

36. Justin Gifford, *Revolution or Death: The Life of Eldridge Cleaver*, Chicago: Lawrence Hill, 2020, 141. Contrary to Magnarella, Gifford [5] says that by the late 1960s the BPP contained "over sixty chapters." By way of comparison, the West Coast Communist periodical had a weekly circulation of 100,000 by the mid-1930s: Al Richmond, *A Long View from the Left: Memoirs of an American Revolutionary*, New York: Delta, 1972, 226.

7. Michael Newton, *Bitter Grain: Huey Newton and the Black Panther Party*, Los Angeles: Holloway House, 1991, 17-18.

38. Interview with Talibah Shakir, formerly known as Linda Miles, in Thandusuzwe Chimurenga, ed., *Some of Us Are Brave: Interviews and Conversations with Sistat in Life and Struggle*, Wakefield, Quebec: Daraja, 2023, 350-362, 358.

39. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 19 September 1969.

40. *The Black Panther*, 2 May 1970.

41. Judson W. Jeffries and Malcolm Foley, "To Live and Die in L.A.," in J.W. Jeffries, ed., *Comrades: A Local History of the Black Panther Party*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007, 255-290, 278, 279, 286.

42. Gerald Home, *Fire This Time: The Watts Uprising and the 1960s*, Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995.

43. Max Felker-Kantor, *Policing Los Angeles: Race, Resistance and the Rise of the LAPD*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018, 21, 1, 7: Ratio of police to population in L.A. by mid-1950s 1.87 cops per 1000 compared with 4 per 1000 in Detroit, New York and Chicago, 74. In 1960 there were 5200 cops in L.A., and 8414 in 1990, and a "per capita increase from 2.1 to 2.4 officers per [1000 residents]." Arrests for drunkenness "reached nearly 70,000 in 1967 then declined to just over 6000 in 1982...." See also Shahan Mufti, *American Caliph: The True Story of a Muslim Mystic, a*

adopted was draconian deterrence, i.e., often roughhousing innocents to send a message that one should avoid at all costs engaging with the police. Moreover, the spiderweb of freeways helped to convince some of the lumpen elements that the BPP relied on that an entire business model of miscreance could be built upon them.⁴⁴ A problem, of course, was that the California Highway Patrol also had access to these roads.

"L.A. pigs," said the BPP repetitively, "shoot first, question later."⁴⁵ Their chairman, Bobby Seale, fumed that "one of the worst police departments in this country" is the LAPD; they "shoot up our free clinic...they shot it up so much that the doctors and nurses...some 7 or 8 of them that were donating their time down there, decided to leave, because they just got scared."⁴⁶ A critical co-factor was detected by the Chicano leader Corky Gonzalez, who asserted not without reason that L.A. was the "number one police state and city in United States history." Not coincidentally, a reasoned scholar finds that the police there "focused on monitoring, tracking and disciplining progressive organizations." Thus, "Black Power organizations also came under intense surveillance," says Max Felker-Kantor, as a "Black Power Section" of the LAPD "grew to over twenty officers at its height in the late 1970s." According to the valorized LAPD officer, Ed Brimmer, "We basically kept records on all Panther activity in Southern California as a primary objective."⁴⁷

This rampant violence was facilitated, said the BPP, by the reality that the Southland was a "difficult area in which to organize" due to "its size and extremely conservative political attitudes."⁴⁸

Repression can produce resistance and also heightened awareness. John Floyd, a premier Southland activist in 1971 argued that though it was

Hollywood Epic and the 1977 Siege of Washington, D.C., New York: FSG, 2022, 157: The LAPD had a "reputation for shooting" first then asking questions, distinguishing it from other departments also known for their bloodthirstiness.

44. Rick Ross, *Freeway Ricky Ross: The Untold Autobiography*, Scotts Valley, Calif.: CreateSpace, 2014. On Ross, see also *Los Angeles Times*, 14 September 1996. See also Bernard Arafat, Oral History, 29 December 2020, CSU-Northridge (abbrev. Bernard Arafat, Oral History): This "Black Power" figure in L.A. admitted that "one of the first novels that we read was Iceberg Slim and 'Trick Baby'.... I want[ed] to be or represent a pimp and a player at the time," the lead character in this popular work. The glorification of the pimp and the lumpen had clear implications for women's equality.

45. *The Black Panther*, 5 July 1969.

46. *The Black Panther*, 19 August 1972.

47. Felker-Kantor, *Policing Los Angeles*, 83, 138, 149. Cf. *The Black Panther*, 11 February 1978: Four tons of L.A. County records destroyed: "No prosecutions." Obviously, this mightily complicates historical reconstruction. Cf. Jack Olsen, *Last Man Standing: The Tragedy and Triumph of Geronimo Pratt*, New York: Anchor, 2001, 208: Malevolent government agent, Dothard Perry "torched Black radical Angela Davis' lifetime files." According to Felker-Kantor, 144, in 1975-1976, the LAPD purged millions of files. See also Roger Rapoport, "The Confessions of Othello," on Perry, formerly of U.S. military intelligence, in *Penthouse*, 1980, Reel 62, Black Panther Documents. On the same reel see Affidavit of Perry, 10 February 1978: His dirty tricks against the BPP sketched.

48. *The Black Panther*, 14 June 1969.

“unknown...Los Angeles has been the center of Black Urban Militant Thought. The whole style of contemporary Black Militancy was conceived in [L.A.] as early as 1963.” The “Afro-American Association gathered most of the Black Militants in Los Angeles,” he said; Karenga “was the president,” and others included “Ayuko Babu,” who went on to found the pathbreaking Pan-African Film Festival, and Tut Hayes.⁴⁹

Indicative of the times is that even Karenga of L.A., often depicted as the antipode of the BPP because of his comrades’ role in the killing of two Panthers at UCLA in 1969, in 1977 professed to be a “socialist” too. His view is that Eldridge Cleaver was responsible for the tensions between the two forces.⁵⁰

Hence, the radical politics of Southern California are best understood by not scrutinizing the Panthers in isolation. B. Kwaku Duren, who was to become a leader of the Panthers in the 1970s, earlier in that tumultuous decade led the political action arm of the NAACP in Long Beach.⁵¹ By 1977, Panther founder Huey P. Newton forked over a hefty \$500 to become a life member of the NAACP.⁵² Though he was to become a sharp critic of the CP, in his youth Newton assertively defended Paul Robeson, the Russophile actor and activist: “When I heard teachers criticizing him,” said Newton, “I defended him and believed in him.” Indeed, “everything they supported, I opposed. That was how I first became a supporter of Fidel Castro.”⁵³ Eldridge Cleaver spoke eloquently of “such great Black men as the late W.E.B. Du Bois and Paul Robeson.”⁵⁴ Their Oakland comrade, Panther leader David Hilliard, hailed his region’s “local hero,” Australian-born labor leader, the stevedore Harry Bridges—perhaps the most powerful leftist in the nation—whom Washington sought repeatedly to deport on grounds that he was a closet Communist.⁵⁵ Like a number of radicals, Hilliard too was influenced by Stalin’s *Foundations of Leninism*.⁵⁶ (For a time Hilliard worked as a stevedore, while his Panther comrade Kenny Horston was leader of the BPP caucus at the massive General Motors plant in Fremont,⁵⁷—though he was sacked

49. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 20 May 1971.

50. Ron Karenga to Martin Sklar of “In These Times,” 22 June 1977, Reel 5, Black Panther Documents.

51. Report, 2 September 1971, Carton 46, NAACP Papers, UC Berkeley (abbrev. NAACP Papers-UCB).

52. Virginia Robinson, Chairperson, Bay Area Life Membership Committee to Huey P. Newton, 1 September 1977, Reel 5, Black Panther Documents.

53. Newton, *Revolutionary Suicide*, 29, 49-50.

54. Eldridge Cleaver, *Soul on Ice*, New York: McGraw Hill, 1968, 67.

55. David Hilliard and Lewis Cole, *This Side of Glory: The Autobiography of David Hilliard and the Story of the Black Panther Party*, Boston: Little, Brown, 1993, 68. On Bridges, see Gerald Horne, *Fighting in Paradise: Labor Unions, Racism and Communists in the Making of Modern Hawaii*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2011. See also Jake A. Wilson, *Solidarity Forever? Race, Gender and Unionism in the Ports of Southern California*, Lanham, Md.: Lexington, 2016.

56. Chard, *Nixon’s War*, 75.

57. *The Black Panther*, 20 April 1969.

by June 1970⁵⁸—while the BPP “Minister of Labor” in Kansas City toiled alongside workers at Ford and GM in perpetrating strikes,⁵⁹ illustrative of the working-class roots of the party, even as they lauded the lumpen; it is likely that the often unaddressed class collaborationism of too many of the Euro-American working class drove them toward the lumpen.⁶⁰)

Oakland Red, Jessica Mitford, was told by Newton that when he was a youth, her spouse, the Communist lawyer Robert Treuhaft, was “a hero to all the kids” due to his militant defense in cases of Negro youth adopted by the similarly Communist-led Civil Rights Congress.⁶¹ When Panther Pete O’Neal was on the lam, he was aided by a “wealthy” Communist in Manhattan and another Red in Sweden, as he headed to Algiers.⁶²

58. *People’s World*, 27 June 1970.

59. Magnarella, *Black Panther in Exile*, 53.

60. The BPP deployment of the term “lumpen” should be approached cautiously. Seemingly, it appeared to signify an affect of toughness and militancy, as much as anything else. See, e.g., *Voice of the Lumpen*, ca. 1970, Reel 26, Black Panther Documents: This BPP organ was aimed at Black soldiers and highlighted Che Guevara and Newton and carried the headline: “Black Soldiers as revolutionaries to overthrow the ruling class.” Cf. “Break de Chains,” September 1973, BLA Vertical File, Freedom Archives-Berkeley, Calif. (abbrev. BLA Vertical File), The National Committee for the Defense of Joanne Chesimard and Clark Squires: “There is a thin line between bandits and revolutionaries.... Ben Bella did two years in prison for sticking up colonialist banks... Stalin was the bank robber for the Russian Revolution....” The Black Liberation Army of the U.S. “are small urban guerrilla units waging armed struggle... Babylonian equivalent to the Tupamaros” of Uruguay; “some of us do not even claim to be Marxist-Leninists.” They cited favorably the slain George Jackson and the idea of the “foco,” discussed below. See Lodge, *Red Road to Freedom*, 566: Party leader Joe Slovo, one of Nelson Mandela’s closest comrades, was critical of Régis Debray, an author of the “foco” approach. See also “Black Liberation Army Communique,” 5 October 1981, Ron Wilkins Papers, California State University-Dominguez Hills (abbrev. Ron Wilkins Papers) on the Brinks expropriation. Of course, it is one thing to deploy bank robbing as a tactic in a party that proclaims the proletariat as the vanguard, quite another when the lumpen itself is boosted as the vanguard. William Brent, Panther in exile in Cuba, reconsidered this basic question. See Remarks, ca. February 1976, Reel 12, Black Panther Documents: “I don’t think that prisoners or the prison movement will ever be the vanguard of the revolution... many people of the left have tried to romanticize the prisoner....” He termed his comrades “neophyte students of Marxism... we read one line [of Marxism] and picked up a gun.” See also Collected Works of the Black Liberation Army, vol. 1, 270-271: “So-called lumpen class cannot carry our liberation struggle forward on its own,” as they tend to be “undisciplined, dogmatic and easily prone to diversion... [but] will supply some of the most dedicated comrades to the struggle....” As shall be seen below, there was a petit bourgeois radical trend in our movement too: See Philip Short, *Pol Pot: The History of a Nightmare*, London: Holt, 2006: “Characteristics of the petty bourgeoisie: individualism, volatility, indiscipline and a tendency to metaphysics and anarchism....”

61. Peter Y. Sussman, ed., *Decca: The Letters of Jessica Mitford*, New York: Knopf, 2006, 104. See also Gerald Home, *Communist Front? The Civil Rights Congress, 1946-1956*, London: Associated University Presses, 1988.

62. Gaidi Faraj, *Unearthing the Underground: A Study of Radical Activism in the Black Panther Party and the Black Liberation Army*, Berkeley: University of California, 2007, 190, 194.

The Panthers' chief counsel, Charles Garry of San Francisco,⁶³ recalled the "my representation of the Civil Rights Congress and Bob Wells," a noted CP-backed prison case, "my committee work to save the Rosenbergs," accused Communist spies for Moscow, "my Progressive Party congressional candidacy and my participation in the California Labor School," were "cited...as proof of my Communist affiliations."⁶⁴ Actually, by 1948 he was jailed after using a loudspeaker to warn waterfront workers of "the threat of fascism," while mounting a third-party race on the CP-backed Independent Progressive Party ticket.⁶⁵ By 1949 Garry was revving up for a run for the U.S. Congress which said an admiring Communist, speaking of San Francisco, "culminated a volunteer signature campaign...without parallel in the city's political history."⁶⁶ By 1970 Garry remained sufficiently audacious to assert, concerning V.I. Lenin, "I wish I had his understanding of the class struggle."⁶⁷

According to Angela Davis's counsel Doris Walker, the Reverend Ralph Abernathy—perhaps the closest comrade of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.—was "raised by an aunt of Angela's."⁶⁸ James Forman, who had played a prime role with both the BPP and SNCC was described by the young Communist Bettina Aptheker as the "son-in-law" of Jessica Mitford, the Oakland Communist of elite British ancestry.⁶⁹ Accused San Diego Communist Harry Steinmetz, after being forced from a local campus, wound up at Atlanta's Morehouse College by the 1950s, where, he said, he became "very close to the Kings."⁷⁰ Davis, in turn, said the CP press beamingly, was "the head of the Bobby Seale Defense Committee in Los Angeles," referring to the embattled BPP co-founder.⁷¹ (There were those who held memberships in both parties, Communists and Panthers alike.)⁷² Audaciously, in her opening statement in her capital case in 1971, Davis spoke openly of her role as Chair of the Soledad Defense Committee in L.A., seeking to free George Jackson and his comrades, and added, "I vigorously participated in

63. Black Communist William Patterson advised the BPP to hire Garry: See Walt Thompson, "What's Left of the Black Left," n.d., Reel 14, Black Panther Documents.

64. Charles Garry and Art Goldberg, *Streetfighter in the Courtroom: The People's Advocate*, New York: Dutton, 1977, 66. See also *New Mexico Daily Lobo*, 20 September 1972, Reel 24, Black Panther Documents: Early in his career, Garry represented left-leaning, often Communist-led unions.

65. *Daily People's World*, 28 May 1948.

66. *Daily People's World*, 30 September 1949.

67. Interview with Charles Garry, 25 December 1970, Reel 55, Black Panther Documents.

68. Doris Walker to Sallye Davis, 17 November 1971, Box 43, Angela Davis Papers, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. (abbrev. Angela Davis Papers-Harvard). On how Davis's sister Fania and her then partner Sam Jordan got caught up in the UCSD controversy swirling around Davis, see e.g., Joy James, *Contextualizing Angela Davis: The Agency and Identity of an Icon*, London: Bloomsbury, 2024, 150-154.

69. Bettina Aptheker to Angela Davis, 23 January 1971, Box 51, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

70. Harry Steinmetz, Oral History, 12 October 1980, SDSU (abbrev. Harry Steinmetz, Oral History).

71. *People's World*, 21 March 1971.

72. Abt with Myerson, *Advocate and Activist*, 272.

The Panthers' chief counsel, Charles Garry of San Francisco,⁶³ recalled that "my representation of the Civil Rights Congress and Bob Wells," a noted CP-backed prison case, "my committee work to save the Rosenbergs," accused Communist spies for Moscow, "my Progressive Party congressional candidacy and my participation in the California Labor School," were "cited...as proof of my Communist affiliations."⁶⁴ Actually, by 1948 he was jailed after using a loudspeaker to warn waterfront workers of "the threat of fascism," while mounting a third-party race on the CP-backed Independent Progressive Party ticket.⁶⁵ By 1949 Garry was revving up for a run for the U.S. Congress which, said an admiring Communist, speaking of San Francisco, "culminated a volunteer signature campaign...without parallel in the city's political history."⁶⁶ By 1970 Garry remained sufficiently audacious to assert, concerning V.I. Lenin, "I wish I had his understanding of the class struggle."⁶⁷

According to Angela Davis's counsel Doris Walker, the Reverend Ralph Abernathy—perhaps the closest comrade of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.—was "raised by an aunt of Angela's."⁶⁸ James Forman, who had played a prime role with both the BPP and SNCC was described by the young Communist Bettina Aptheker as the "son-in-law" of Jessica Mitford, the Oakland Communist of elite British ancestry.⁶⁹ Accused San Diego Communist Harry Steinmetz, after being forced from a local campus, wound up at Atlanta's Morehouse College by the 1950s, where, he said, he became "very close to the Kings."⁷⁰ Davis, in turn, said the CP press beamingly, was "the head of the Bobby Seale Defense Committee in Los Angeles," referring to the embattled BPP co-founder.⁷¹ (There were those who held memberships in both parties, Communists and Panthers alike.)⁷² Audaciously, in her opening statement in her capital case in 1971, Davis spoke openly of her role as Chair of the Soledad Defense Committee in L.A., seeking to free George Jackson and his comrades, and added, "I vigorously participated in

63. Black Communist William Patterson advised the BPP to hire Garry: See Walt Thompson, "What's Left of the Black Left," n.d., Reel 14, Black Panther Documents.

64. Charles Garry and Art Goldberg, *Streetfighter in the Courtroom: The People's Advocate*, New York: Dutton, 1977, 66. See also *New Mexico Daily Lobo*, 20 September 1972, Reel 24, Black Panther Documents: Early in his career, Garry represented left-leaning, often Communist-led unions.

65. *Daily People's World*, 28 May 1948.

66. *Daily People's World*, 30 September 1949.

67. Interview with Charles Garry, 25 December 1970, Reel 55, Black Panther Documents.

68. Doris Walker to Sallye Davis, 17 November 1971, Box 43, Angela Davis Papers, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. (abbrev. Angela Davis Papers-Harvard). On how Davis's sister Fania and her then partner Sam Jordan got caught up in the UCSD controversy swirling around Davis, see e.g., Joy James, *Contextualizing Angela Davis: The Agency and Identity of an Icon*, London: Bloomsbury, 2024, 150-154.

69. Bettina Aptheker to Angela Davis, 23 January 1971, Box 51, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

70. Harry Steinmetz, Oral History, 12 October 1980, SDSU (abbrev. Harry Steinmetz, Oral History).

71. *People's World*, 21 March 1971.

72. Abt with Myerson, *Advocate and Activist*, 272.

the movement to free Ericka Huggins and Bobby Seale. I helped to organize the movement around the 18 members of the Black Panther Party who were arrested in Los Angeles.”⁷³

Eldridge Cleaver, the titular head of the BPP legation in Algiers, spoke of his relationship to Bill Sherman, “an ex member of the Communist Party and at that time,” 1967, a “member of the Central Committee” of the BPP.⁷⁴ Raymond “Masai” Hewitt, once a top Panther, eventually worked alongside the CP.⁷⁵ Then there was Rodney Barnette, who was a founder of the BPP chapter in Compton, Calif., then a bodyguard for Davis during her travails—and by 1990 owned, said Bettina Aptheker, the “first Black owned gay bar” in San Francisco, at 1884 Market Street.⁷⁶ L.A. Panther Tommy Harper, said his comrade Wayne Pharr, “identified strongly with the local Communists.”⁷⁷

The flexible Davis was said by the FBI to be the “protocol officer” of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee in Los Angeles.⁷⁸ For even SNCC in those days outlining their “structure and basic programs,” noted that the “methods to achieve these objectives include...armed struggle.”⁷⁹

Eugene Dennis, a leader of U.S. Communists during the hysterical 1950s, prepared—in a sense—by spending 1932-34 in South Africa as a representative of the Communist International of Moscow, where he liaised with the ascending African National Congress of Nelson Mandela.⁸⁰

This cross-fertilization among diverse forces made it more problematic for the state to marginalize radicals. But, on the other hand, it thrust together individuals with often contrasting ideologies, with resultant friction made to order for state manipulation.

Jack Woddis, the British Communist with close ties to his U.S. counterparts, derided the ideas of Frantz Fanon, the Martinican *cum* Algerian theorist, who was seen as hailing the potential of the lumpen-proletariat, a core concept of the Panthers (though they often conflated this stratum with the reserve army of labor, the simply unemployed). “On this question of social classes,” said Woddis, Fanon

73. Opening Statement, 29 March 1972, Reel 9, Angela Davis Case Collection, CSU-Sacramento (abbrev. Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS). This collection, on microform via Inter-Library Loan, is also available at UC Berkeley.

74. Eldridge Cleaver, comment, in Robert Scheer, *Eldridge Cleaver: Post-Prison Writings and Speeches*, New York: Random House, 1969, 25.

75. Wayne Pharr, *Nine Lives of a Black Panther: A Story of Survival*, Chicago: Lawrence Hill, 2014, 277.

76. Bettina Aptheker, *Communists in Closets: Queering the History, 1930s-1990s*, New York: Routledge, 2023, 228. Cf. Rustam Alexander, *Red Closet: The Hidden History of Gay Oppression in the USSR*, Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2023.

77. Pharr, *Nine Lives*, 211.

78. Report, 12 May 1968, Reel 2, FBI File on the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, Princeton University.

79. Undated program, Ron Wilkins Papers.

80. Lodge, *Red Road to Freedom*, 165.

“shows ...confusion...his method is wholly unscientific” studied with “sweeping generalizations that are nowhere borne out by facts,” devoid of “statistics.”⁸¹ U.S. Communist Gus Hall derided Herbert Marcuse, the mentor of Angela Davis and her reason for moving to UC San Diego in the first place. “Left anticommunism and anti-Sovietism,” he informed a Moscow audience, “work particularly on radicalized youth to divert them,” a slap at his prized recruit who by this time—June 1969—was a card-carrying Communist.⁸²

The authorities were keen to fan the flames of discord between and among the forces highlighted in these pages, Panthers and Communists not least. Though decimated as a result of Smith Act trials and COINTELPRO, the CP continued to be viewed with apprehension precisely because it was part of a global network. As the example of Davis showed, and the fact that BPP evidently was being influenced by those like Robeson, and as Bridges and Garry demonstrated, a de facto alliance between the two parties was viewed nervously. By early 1970 the pugnacious FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover apprehensively informed White House Counsel John Ehrlichman that the CP “has increased its support of [the BPP] in recent months.” William L. Patterson, the then elderly Communist operative who had directed the global campaign on behalf of the Scottsboro defendants of the 1930s—a turning point in the erosion of Jim Crow⁸³—was the critical liaison between the two parties (his birth in San Francisco and attendance at the University of California during the World War I era were helpful in this regard).⁸⁴ In consultation with his comrades, Patterson—said Hoover—“called for all [CP] members to support [the Panthers],” and this edict was not ignored as “defense funds and Communist Party literature contains an increasing amount of material favorable to [the BPP].” Hoover said that Patterson and Charlene Mitchell—the CP’s presidential candidate in 1968 and a former resident of Los Angeles—“will run an office in Chicago from which the [CP] will attempt to form a [BPP] Defense Committee.”⁸⁵ Hoover may have been skimming the BPP organ, which

81. *People's World*, 21 September 1968. Cf. Jack Woddie, *New Theories of Revolution: A Commentary on the Views of Frantz Fanon, Régis Debray and Herbert Marcuse*, New York: International, 1972. See also Daniel Patrick Moynihan to Richard Helms, Central Intelligence Agency, 7 March 1969, Presidential Materials Project, White House Central Files, Subject Files CO, Box 9, RNPL (abbrev. Presidential Materials Project-RNPL): The future neoconservative U.S. Senator from New York asks if it is true that Fanon had “relations” with Helms’s agency, which “arranged for him to be brought to the United States and treated [medically]...,” then referred to “his burial in Algeria at which an agent was present.” See also the words of the respected writer Maxwell Geismar, comparing Cleaver to Fanon—and Malcolm X: Cleaver, *Soul on Ice*, 1968, xi-xii.

82. *People's World*, 21 June 1969.

83. Gerald Horne, *Powell v. Alabama: The Scottsboro Case and American Justice*, New York: Franklin Watts, 1997.

84. Gerald Horne, *Black Revolutionary: William Patterson and the Globalization of the African-American Freedom Struggle*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013.

85. J. Edgar Hoover to John Ehrlichman, 26 January 1970, Box 19, White House Special Files, SMOF, Box 19, John Ehrlichman Papers, RNPL (abbrev. John Ehrlichman Papers-RNPL).

once carried a full-page article on Patterson, alongside a becoming photograph, which claimed admiringly that he was a “crack warrior, strategist and organizer,” while his compliment was that “there has been and always will be Panthers.”⁸⁶

Thus, when Newton was on trial in Oakland in 1968 after a murderous encounter with a police, the CP trumpeted support for him, characterizing his prosecution as a “trial of the Black Liberation Movement in the United States.”

The issue was posed starkly: “Do Black Americans have the right to arm themselves and, in extreme instances,” to kill rather than be killed, and do the oppressed “have the right to organize themselves into militant political parties for Self-Defense?” As they raised funds for Newton’s defense, they expressed admiration for his intellectual nimbleness on the witness stand as the charismatic militant “tried to summarize Black History from the 12th century” to the present.⁸⁷

Yet this era of good feelings turned sour, especially after the anti-Soviet alliance between China and the U.S. blossomed by late 1971.⁸⁸ Eldridge Cleaver, who soared to prominence in the BPP as Newton and Seale were entangled in court cases, denounced the CP as a “traitor” to the “non-white” since it stood with Moscow. The CP, he urged, “should not be allowed to function in the Black community at all” as a result, and for good measure included in the *personae non gratae*, the anti-Soviet Socialist Workers Party (presumably because many of their rank-and-file were of European ancestry).⁸⁹ I well recall during this era being engaged in spirited debates with “Black Power” advocates who argued—obvious evidence to the contrary—that actually “white” Moscow and Washington were not engaged in a nuclear standoff but, instead, were conspiring against “colored” China. (Of all the blunders of the BPP, its missteps on the global stage were among the most glaring since historically bedeviled Blacks had to rely on external friends because of the unforgivingly negative correlation of forces domestically.⁹⁰)

As bruited accurately by President Nixon, this alliance marked truly a turning point in world history. As the 1970s unfolded, Lee Kuan Yew, founding father of modern Singapore, made plain what was obvious in remarking that “thirty two nations more than ever before or since were ruled by Marxist or pro-Marxist

86. *The Black Panther*, 4 May 1969.

87. “Black Liberation on Trial: The Case of Huey Newton,” 1968, Vertical File, Black Panthers, AAMLO. As shall be seen below, often the BPP did not make meaningful analytic distinctions between and among “Armed Propaganda,” “Armed Self-Defense” and “Armed Struggle.”

88. This alliance was ironic in light of the ample material aid rendered to Chinese resistance forces by Moscow beginning in the 1920s. See Philip Snow, *China and Russia: Four Centuries of Conflict and Concord*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2023, 232-233: This “arsenal...included twenty-four aeroplanes, 157 field guns, forty-seven mountain guns, 128 mortars, 295 heavy machine guns, 73,393 rifles, 110,000 hand grenades, 124 million rifle cartridges and 500,000 artillery shells.” Plus “five Soviet pilots dropped bombs from...aircraft.”

89. Reginald Major, *A Panther is a Black Cat*, Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 2006 [orig. pub. 1971], 90.

90. Gerald Home, *Facing the Rising Sun: African-Americans, Japan and the Rise of Afro-Asian Solidarity*, New York: New York University Press, 2018.

regimes,” as “the Communists were on the ascendant, and the tide looked like [it was] flowing over the rest of Southeast Asia,” and elsewhere.⁹¹ But this U.S.-China alliance of convenience, which led to massive foreign direct investment in China, along with successful destabilization campaigns in Chile, Afghanistan, Grenada, Aden and other hotspots, reversed the tide of history—at least for a few decades. In the aftermath, the BPP suffered tremendously too.

Doubtlessly, stirring conflict between the BPP and the CP was a goal of their antagonists. The FBI sought to fabricate the story that it was actually Newton who was to blame for the apprehension of Davis in 1970.⁹²

Whatever the case, the growing rupture between the BPP and the CP was not helpful to the former’s global ties, essential given the opposition at home. Dr. Philip S. Foner, who taught at Lincoln University—the HBCU in Pennsylvania—and was known to be quite close to the CP, by May 1970, was “seeking to translate Bobby Seale’s book into Russian and publish it in the Soviet Union” with a hefty percentage of the royalties to be transferred to the Panthers,⁹³ but this and other deals in nations where Communists ruled or were ascendant were wrecked by the antics of those like Cleaver.

The rancorousness was not limited to CP-BPP relations. There were fundamental disagreements about the import of the August 1970 episode that pushed Angela Davis into the global floodlights and prefigured the split in the party that emerged post-1989 and post-1991 with the collapse of the Soviet Union—a direct outgrowth of the debilitating encirclement that China joined. Departing CP ranks then were, among others, Davis, Herbert Aptheker, Charlene

91. Short, *Pol Pot*, 342. In late 1979/early 1980 I was part of a World Peace Council delegation to Cambodia and Vietnam that included the legendary French journalist Henri Alleg. Hence, I was present as the genocidal Khmer Rouge was ousted from power. We also conferred with the Hanoi leadership, who briefed us on how the China-U.S. alliance manifested in Phnom Penh. See also Gerald Horne, *Blows Against the Empire: U.S. Imperialism in Crisis*, New York: International, 2008. See also Henri Alleg, *S.O.S. America*, Paris: Messidor-Temps Actuels, 1985. See also Martin Wagner, “Excoriating Stalin, Criticizing Mao: Entangled Reevaluations of the Past in the 1950s Soviet Union and 1970s/80s China,” *American Historical Review*, 128 (No. 3, September 2023): 1105-1143, 1105, 1132: Revealingly, future paramount Chinese leader, Deng Xiaoping was critical of the 1956 devaluation of Stalin at the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party. Apparently, he and his comrades thought there should be the kind of approach they deployed in evaluating their own Mao Zedong, e.g., “the 70:30 verdict” or 70% positive, 30% negative. See also Domenico Lasurdo, *Stalin: History and Critique of a Black Legend*, Madison, Wis.: Iskra, 2023.

92. “Airtel” from J. Edgar Hoover, 3 November 1970, Exhibit 48 for Trial, Reel 1, Black Panther Documents.

93. P.S. Foner to Charles Garry, 26 May 1970, Reel 40, Black Panther Documents. The Communist Party of Italy, then quite influential, also wanted to collaborate with the BPP. See Editori Riuniti to Dear Sir, 18 December 1970, Reel 64, Black Panther Documents: “We are the publishing house associated with the Italian Communist Party” and wanted to publish a Panther book of “many thousand copies,” pouring funds into BPP coffers.

Mitchell, and other stalwarts.⁹⁴ CP Chairman Henry Winston was unsparing in his denunciation of the “elitist, adventurist, anarchist tactics” that he espied in Marin County in August 1970,⁹⁵ which led to the death of a sitting judge, along with the youthful Jonathan Jackson and two of his comrades, William Christmas and James McClain Davis was irate, arguing that his intervention “can jeopardize my freedom and the freedom of Ruchell Magee,” her co-defendant and survivor of the assault.⁹⁶

This fissure among Communists was not limited to differences over the interpretation of August 1970. A few years earlier, Cyril Briggs weighed in. He was a CP veteran in Los Angeles who had attained notoriety in the World War I era as a result of his instrumental role in forging the heralded African Blood

Brotherhood (a precursor of the BPP and the CP’s “Che/Lumumba Club” that Davis was to join by 1968, insofar as its membership too was of non-settler descendant character). He took his complaint in June 1966 to Winston in that he was “shocked” by a “story” in the CP press that “sharply criticized SNCC for its advocacy of ‘Black Power’,” which, he said, “amounts to a denial to the Negro people of the right of self-determination.” His target was James E. Jackson, who also bolted the CP post-1991 after decades of service, thought to be responsible for this “captious criticism of SNCC.” He was “gratified to hear that the majority of the [CP] delegates did not go along with Jim”⁹⁷—but his anger did not dissipate.

The Communists were hardly alone in being ensnared by internal rancor. I well recall during my tenure in Berkeley watching live on television as Cleaver called Newton from Algiers, unveiling pungent accusations. I was stunned, as were others, as tensions rose accordingly.

* * *

Still, the question remains: What would drive a corps of African-Americans to take up arms? It must be stressed that the BPP initially “picked up the gun” in self-defense, but for various reasons this morphed into an *offensive* approach, i.e., armed struggle to conquer their ultimate foe. Yet the underlying motivating force

94. Daniel Rosenberg, “From Crisis to Split: The Communist Party, USA, 1989-1991,” *American Communist History*, 18 (Nos. 1 & 2, 2019): 1-55. Cf. James, *Contextualizing Angela Davis*, xii, 85: “Davis and other reformers left or were pushed out of the CPUSA in 1991.”

95. Henry Winston, “The Meaning of San Rafael,” New York, 1971, Box 1, Angela Davis Collection, Claremont Colleges, Calif. (abbrev. Angela Davis Collection-Claremont).

96. Bettina Aptheker/Angela Davis reply to Winston, ca. 1971, Box 50, Bettina Aptheker Papers, UC Santa Cruz (abbrev. Bettina Aptheker Papers).

97. Cyril Briggs to Henry Winston, 30 June 1966, Box 112, CPUSA Records, New York University (abbrev. CPUSA Records-NYU). See also Cyril Briggs, ed., *The African Blood Brotherhood*, New York: Garland, 1987.

was a sense of grievance, fertilized over the centuries. Pete O'Neal, a Panther from Kansas City, who wound up in exile in Algeria, then decades in Tanzania, recalled that growing up, "I cannot ever remember a day in my life not being hungry."⁹⁸

The famished were also part of the landscape in the Southland. This was all the more the case in the late 1920s when Black workers were migrating en masse to Los Angeles. But arriving there was hardly simple. H. Claude Hudson, longtime NAACP leader, reported sadly on the "considerable trouble" generated by "the Yellow Way Transportation Company that operates a bus line between Kansas City and Los Angeles"; in a profoundly "unfair" maneuver, at rest stops along the way drivers were "going off leaving [Negroes] and some others" behind in the middle of nowhere, the victimized then being "refused accommodation" as they sought refuge.⁹⁹

Then there was the armed terror that was the everyday accomplice of oppression. It was this factor, for example, that triggered the August 1965 Watts Revolt in Los Angeles, then its peer in 1992 in the aftermath of the beating of Black motorist Rodney King. But in August 1946, Roberta Washington of Los Angeles was pleading urgently to Governor Earl Warren that he should promptly address this plague. "We the Negroes," she insisted, "want you to know of the atrocities that we people suffer by the unchecked brutality of plainclothesmen and policemen in uniform" who specialized in "vicious beatings and uncontrolled insults." The latest victim was the utterly respectable Dr. Joseph A. Hayes of 230 West 43rd Place. "He was dragged from his car [and] beaten with gun butts to the head and face [and] kicked in the groin several times." He was a "veteran of World War II," deepening the agony, not abated when he revealed the names and badge numbers of the miscreants to the proper authorities. "You can play around with dynamite just so long," she warned ominously¹⁰⁰—and her vow materialized when those in her neighborhoods a few decades later began to pick up the gun. She was echoed by Margaret James of the L.A. NAACP, who told the governor of the "resurgence of acts of racial violence in California," as the "beaten" cried out. "Fiery crosses have been burned, synagogues have been defaced," with countless citizens "anonymously threatened in the name of the Ku Klux Klan,"¹⁰¹ who were well armed.

Such depredations were hardly unique to the City of Angels. Due east in Palm Springs, by the 1950s this desert hideaway for the stars was yet to attain the preeminence it was to accrue soon thereafter. This transformation occurred as the

98. Magnarella, *Black Panther in Exile*.

99. Letter from H. Claude Hudson, 12 September 1927, Box Part II-A226, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (abbrev. NAACP Papers-LC).

100. Roberta Washington to Governor Warren, 21 August 1946, Governor Earl Warren Papers, 3977, California State Archives, Sacramento (abbrev. Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA).

101. Margaret James to Governor Warren, 9 August 1946, 3977, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

result of what was described officially as a “city engineered holocaust” as Negroes who then occupied prime downtown land were ousted without proper notice or relocation. Cruelly, many of these workers had gone to work in the morning but found, upon returning in the evening, their homes in ashes. As many as 2000 families were burned out, robbing them of generational wealth. Poignantly, one victim moaned that “this dog came running across the street...the dog was on fire and the house burned up too.”¹⁰²

By early 1966, the Du Bois Club of Los Angeles—an affiliate of the CP—was exasperated, providing a premonition as to why arming was becoming fashionable. “Police brutality,” they reminded, i.e., “the presence of an occupation force armed to the teeth and ready to shoot anything black, heads the list of grievances of the Negro community—especially [since] the people’s uprising of last August,” referencing the Watts Revolt. Behind this protest was Franklin Alexander,¹⁰³ who helped to recruit Davis to Che/Lumumba shortly thereafter. (As suggested in my aforementioned book on Watts, it was seen as anomalous that a revolt would occur as the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was being passed. However, the easing of racist pressure was insufficient to overcome the opinion then unleashed: that sterner stuff would be required in order to deliver justice—a point delivered maximally by the Panthers shortly thereafter.)¹⁰⁴

It was also Franklin Alexander, scion of a Black Communist family, who in October 1970 delivered one of the more startling public speeches ever presented in radical history. The scene was a fundraiser for the CP press, and he was introduced as Chairman of Che/Lumumba. By then friction between his party and the BPP was escalating but, remarkably, he positioned his club midway between the two parties. In a comment that should have received more attention, the perceptive Alexander chided “both Huey and [William] Patterson” who made the “mistake of viewing the working class and black people as different entities”; he even reproached the events of 7 August, weeks earlier, as yet “another example of premature use of tactics” while denying that fascism then existed in the U.S.,¹⁰⁵ a contention of a number of leading Panthers, especially those behind bars.

There were other scalding points made that will be addressed below, but his depiction of the working class requires immediate attention. For it has been difficult to grasp the elemental issue that the enslaved in the U.S. were—among

102. *Los Angeles Times*, 22 April 2023.

103. Du Bois Club pamphlet, January 1966, Series III, Box 11, Gilbert Benjamin Papers, California State University Northridge (abbrev. Gilbert Benjamin Papers).

104. Analogize post-independence Zanzibar when those who formerly had been enslaved there revolted bloodily and liquidated those thought to be—even loosely—part of the enslaving class. See, e.g., John Okello, *Revolution in Zanzibar*, Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1967. Likewise, in understanding the atrocious treatment of Blacks, what needs to be considered is the fury unleashed when massive investments in enslaved property were expropriated without compensation in 1865. See, e.g., Home, *Counter-Revolution of 1836*.

105. Remarks by Franklin Alexander, 11 October 1970, Reel 16, Black Panther Documents.

other things—the unpaid sector of the working class. And their interests were not always in accord with other members of that class; for example, for the longest period in the antebellum era, the unpaid tended toward pro-London sentiments—even during the 1812 war—which was hardly the norm among the class as a whole.¹⁰⁶ The understandable tendency to homogenize the interests of the class often has led to ignoring this fundamental matter, which has contributed to seeking to compel the enslaved and/or their descendants to endorse an agenda developed by the much more populous wage and/or skilled sector. This has been compounded by the inability to critique or even recognize settler colonialism, reflected in the historical summaries relied upon by radicals, such as those by Herbert Aptheker, who rarely strayed systematically beyond 1750,¹⁰⁷ though settlers had descended upon North America as early as the 1520s. This truncated timeline led to taking the European presence on this soil for granted and compromised the ability to grasp firmly the Indigenous Question,¹⁰⁸ along with neatly eliding the potent matter of class collaboration which inhered in settler colonialism, and which did not sync altogether with the class struggle ethos that inhered in the unpaid sector of the working class.¹⁰⁹

To complete Alexander's insight, the inability to grasp the nature of the working class in particular laid the groundwork for one of the BPP's most stinging theoretical and practical errors: the reliance upon the lumpen-proletariat,¹¹⁰ a formulation that opened the door for Eldridge Cleaver's manifold deviations. The apotheosis of this fascination with the lumpen was embodied by Seale's blistering verdict on the drug-implicated slaying of his fellow BPP founder, Newton in 1989 in Oakland: "He was a motherfucking drug dealer. He was ripping off the Panther organization."¹¹¹

106. See, e.g., Gerald Home, *Negro Comrades of the Crown: African Americans and the British Empire Fight the U.S. before Emancipation*, New York: New York University Press, 2012. As adumbrated in this book, what also needs to be considered is whether "republicanism" in the context of settler colonialism structurally was designed to exclude Blacks—and the Indigenous.

107. Herbert Aptheker, *Early Years of the Republic: From the End of the Revolution to the First Administration of Washington (1783-1793)*, New York: International, 1976; Herbert Aptheker, *The American Revolution, 1763-1783; A History of the American People: An Interpretation*, New York: International, 1960. Herbert Aptheker, *The Colonial Era: A History of the American People*, New York: International, 1959.

108. Ned Blackhawk, *The Rediscovery of America: Native Peoples and the Unmaking of U.S. History*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2023.

109. See, e.g., Gerald Home, *The Dawning of the Apocalypse: The Roots of Slavery, White Supremacy, Settler Colonialism and Capitalism in the Long 16th Century*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 2020.

110. On the lumpen and an implicit confrontation with the idea that lumpen were favored since they were more interested in "punching the boss," not "punching a timeclock"—which begs the question of what to do after the boss hits the floor—see Tionne Parris, ed., *I Dare Say: The Gerald Home Reader*, London: OR Books, 2024.

111. David and Margaret Talbot, *By the Light of Burning Dreams: The Triumphs and Tragedies of the Second American Revolution*, New York: HarperCollins, 2021, 103. See also Mitchell Schwarzer,

Yet it was not just Newton. The party opened the door *ab initio* to this trend. Panther leader Pete O'Neal, subsequently exiled in Algeria and Tanzania, acknowledged the "pull of the street" that caused him to become a "pimp." But, like the Nation of Islam, he thought that the party "transformed drug addicts, thieves and thugs and uplifted them."¹¹²

Similarly, repetitive reference to the "Negro people" was not inaccurate, just as categorizing the BPP within the "Black Power" rubric was not wholly mistaken; but, as noted, the latter elided their socialist essence and the former hindered the ability to perceive the full class character of African Americans, from unpaid workers through super-exploited workers.

Unfortunately, as a tennis player is often as competent as her competition, it was not easy for socialists to discern the motion of history when the nation as a whole was, ideologically, in the midst of a great leap backward. Thus, the *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, a prime voice of "Black Power," utilized the Negro U.S. intelligence agent Richard Gibson¹¹³ as a correspondent who railed heartily against African hero Amilcar Cabral, since his party "received large Soviet assistance."¹¹⁴ Gibson captured the front page of this rag in April 1967 when he denounced "Russian Communists in Africa and Asia."¹¹⁵ When the BPP seized the imagination of many with its armed propagandistic demonstration at the Capitol in Sacramento, this paper's page 1 reportage termed it a "phony demonstration," the "phoniest demonstration of the century," as "armed members of the Phony Black Panther Organization" engaged in "tactics" that were "suspicious."¹¹⁶ As for left-wing San Francisco attorney Beverly Axelrod, responsible as any for freeing Eldridge Cleaver from prison, she was scorned for her supposed "strong attraction...toward Negro men" and her "un-American activities."¹¹⁷ As for the Community Alert Patrol, which served as a model for the BPP insofar as it sought to police the police? It was the "Black Nazi Patrol," it was announced scurrilously, which received \$238,429 from the federal government and was little more than a "goon squad...overbearing, obnoxious and abusive" and was "being trained to become 'Young Black Nazis.'"¹¹⁸

Hella Town: Oakland's History of Development and Disruption, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2021. Cf. Neelam Sharma to Seale, 13 July 1998, Box 5, B. Kwaku Duren Papers, University of Southern California (abbrev. B. Kwaku Duren Papers): His "total disparagement" of Newton was "really uncalled for...not only disturbing but incredible."

112. Magnarella, *Black Panther in Exile*, 36, 49.

113. See Gerald Horne, *White Supremacy Confronted: U.S. Imperialism and Anti-Communism vs. the Liberation of Southern Africa, from Rhodes to Mandela*, New York: International, 2019, *passim*. See also *Newsweek*, 15 May 2018, which exposed Gibson's ties to U.S. intelligence.

114. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 20 April 1967.

115. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 15 April 1967.

116. *Los Angeles Herald Dispatch*, 13 May 1967. See picture of this manifestation, *The Black Panther*, 29 May 1976: Note artist Emory Douglas in vanguard.

117. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 11 May 1967.

118. *Los Angeles Herald Dispatch*, 1 June 1967.

As I write in 2023, both New York City and Los Angeles have African-American mayors. The chief executive of the former is an ex-cop, while Karen Bass of L.A. is a former activist on behalf of socialist Cuba.¹¹⁹

A weakness of the radical left generally in the U.S. has been an inability—or unwillingness—to acknowledge federalism in their homeland. Again, the impulse—as with collapsing the crucial distinction between the unpaid and wage workers—might be to forge unity under adverse conditions, to have one homogenized line. However, if there were to be a race to lead a federal Europe, I trust that distinctions would be drawn between, say, France and Hungary, for example.

It was left to the outsider, British-born Jessica Mitford, to comprehend what was at play. In 1978 she opined that “the Party NY is a lot more rigid than out here.... NY CP is far more factional” than in the Golden State.¹²⁰

At the crucial Smith Act trial of CP leaders unfolding in L.A. in 1951, a point that arose early on was that defendant Bernadette Doyle, in 1943, had received 20% of the vote in her race for Mayor of Berkeley and a few years later a still stunning 600,000 votes in a statewide race¹²¹—the prosecution of her and her comrades suggesting that at play during this trial was an old-fashioned attempt to crush opposition, combined with ritualistic anticommunism. (Los Angeles was the first city in California, and among the first in the nation, to pass a local Communist registration ordinance.)¹²² In 1964, while the pall of McCarthyism had yet to lift, Black Communist William Taylor received almost 34,000 votes in a contest for Supervisor of L.A. County; his 13% of the total was seen by anticommunist commentator Victor Riesel as “nothing short of astounding.”¹²³ In 1966, as the Panthers were taking off, Robert Treuhaft, a Communist attorney, received 75,000 votes in a race for District Attorney in Alameda County, 30% of the total and disproportionately from heavily Negro Oakland at that.¹²⁴ That same year, Dorothy Healey got 83,891 votes running as L.A. County’s tax assessor; the FBI said that this was “the highest number received by a Communist Party member in a public election in the past 16 years”: A copy of this worried report was sent to

119. See Karen Bass and Nativio Lopez for 11th World Festival of Youth and Students, Cuba, 15 January 1978, meeting at 2228 West 7th Street, L.A., Box 6, B. Kwaku Duren Papers.

120. Jessica Mitford to “Dear A,” 18 May 1978 in Sussman, *Decca*, 512-513.

121. Transcript, 20 February 1952, RG 21, Box 1338, *USA v. Schneiderman*, NARA-Riverside.

122. Shana Beth Bernstein, “Building Bridges at Home in a Time of Global Conflict: Interracial Cooperation and the Fight for Civil Rights in Los Angeles, 1933-1954,” Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 2003, 11.

123. *Los Angeles Times*, 17 June 1964.

124. Jessica Mitford, *A Fine Old Conflict*, New York: Knopf, 1977, 125.

the White House.¹²⁵ In 1969, as she was on the verge of departing the ranks, L.A.

Communist chief Dorothy Healey argued with reason that “for three years we were the only district to continually present Communist candidates...; in the name of the CP we speak to more people and issue more pamphlets than any district.”¹²⁶

By 1972 Taylor’s total had risen to 51,000, 15% of the vote, nearly matching the amount of presidential primary hopeful Shirley Chisholm in the county and doubling that of the ballots cast for another presidential hopeful, L.A.’s Mayor Sam Yorty. Taylor, who received possibly 1/3 of the district’s black vote, explained, “the Black community hasn’t had the fear of the Communist bugaboo that whites have had.”¹²⁷ The wider point is that it was hardly coincidental that the BPP would be founded in the Golden State or that cadre like George and Jonathan Jackson, Elmer “Geronimo” Pratt, also known as Geronimo ji Jaga, and Angela Davis would sow their oats in the Southland—or that after Oakland, the next chapter to be organized was in Los Angeles.¹²⁸ Part of the reason for the Southland’s importance—as shall be seen—is the funding radicals were able to draw upon from Hollywood, which included many from working-class backgrounds who had become wealthy but were willing to subsidize radicalism.

The answer as to why L.A. and why California will be addressed as these pages unwind. Suffice it to say for now that the uniqueness of this Far West region is embedded in geography. When the right-wing citadel that was San Diego sought to impose Jim Crow across the border, they were instructed sternly by James Freeman of San Ysidro that this was “against the law of Mexico.”¹²⁹ This southern neighbor, whose politics even now are to the left of the U.S., had a civilizing effect regionally. Ineluctably, this generated a fierce counter-reaction: It was in early 1962 that the woman who answered to the name of Mrs. Russell Kane, wrote the mossback reactionary Congressman Robert Carlton Wilson, from her comfortable abode at 7048 Dume Drive in Malibu, to inform him that “Chinese troops are

125. J. Edgar Hoover to the Attorney General, copy to Marvin Watson in the White House, 15 June 1966, 100-4415 60, Box 3, Dorothy Healey Papers-UCLA.

126. Report to Southern California District Convention, 4 April 1969, Box 21A, Dorothy Healey Papers, California State University Long Beach (abbrev. Dorothy Healey Papers, CSU-Long Beach). Perhaps not unrelatedly, Black commentator Louis Lomax in 1965 termed her “one of the most controversial and perhaps one of the most hated women in America”: Transcript of interview on KTTV, L.A. (Channel 11), 5476 Sunset Blvd., 23 May 1965, Box 3, Dorothy Healey Papers-UCLA.

127. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 16 June 1972. Smith Act defendant William Schneiderman found it curious that Taylor and fellow Black Communist leader Hursel Alexander were “never arrested” although they were part of “state leadership,” perhaps a reflection of reluctance to tangle with the Negro community. Schneiderman, *Dissent on Trial*, 134.

128. Gifford, *Revolution or Death*, 150.

129. James Freeman to Harold Brown, n.d., Box 2, Harold Brown Papers, SDSU (abbrev. Harold Brown Papers). Historically, the U.S. had conflicted relations with its southern neighbor, heightening concerns that resonated in the Southland. See, e.g., Gerald Horne, *Black and Brown: African-Americans and the Mexican Revolution, 1910-1920*, New York: New York University, 2005.

being brought into Mexico," i.e., "35,000" of these forces were "helping the Communist takeover of Mexico."¹³⁰

Likewise, the diversity of the region included a substantial population of Japanese origin that often leaned left. The symbol of this radicalism was Sen Katayama, a founder of the Japanese Communist Party, who also spent time in California and was an early member of the CPUSA.¹³¹ One scholar has observed that at one point 1 in 5000 U.S. nationals were Communists, while 1 in 650 were so oriented among Japanese Americans.¹³² Illustratively, stevedores in the Far West were deeply influenced by Communists, while back East these workers were shaped by gangsters.¹³³

Consequently, so-called "Communist fronts" were competitive with liberal competitors, such as the NAACP, at least for a while. During the early stages of the Red Scare, Mitford asserts that the "predominantly black" Civil Rights Congress chapter had some "500 dues paying members—this at a time when the NAACP chapter in Oakland could muster no more than fifty." This "small...do-nothing organization" stood on the sidelines as the CRC fomented a "specific probe...into the overall practices of a major police department toward minority groups...[the] first time in the history of the nation."¹³⁴

Unsurprisingly, during the Smith Act trials, the jury was out for a mere seven hours in Manhattan; two hours in Baltimore, and six days in Los Angeles, suggesting more sober consideration indicative of awareness of the conspicuous role of regional Reds before the guilty verdict emerged.¹³⁵

L.A. was also a major manufacturing center—apparel and automobiles for a good deal of the 20th century. But entertainment was the product that made the town notorious. This industry over the decades had become renowned for generating support for liberal and radical causes.¹³⁶ This remained true during the heyday of the CP and BPP—indeed, the strength of both in the Southland was tied intimately to this industry. It was not unusual when, in 1971, Bert Schneider, scion of studio royalty and a famed producer himself, sent two hefty checks to Newton, "one from myself, one from Bob Rafelson," the latter having just directed the engrossing Jack Nicholson vehicle, *Five Easy Pieces*. Schneider signed off

130. Mrs. Russell Kane to Congressman Wilson, 2 February 1962, Box 166, Robert Carlton Wilson Papers, SDSU (abbrev. Robert Carlton Wilson Papers).

131. Hyman Kulbin, *Asian Revolutionary: The Life of Sen Katayama*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964.

132. Bernstein, "Building Bridges," 74.

133. Howard Kimmeldorf, *Reds or Rackets? The Making of Radical and Conservative Unions on the Waterfront*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.

134. Mitford, *Fine Old Conflict*, 105, 114.

135. Richmond, *Long View*, 350.

136. See, e.g., Gerald Horne, *Class Struggle in Hollywood, 1930-1950: Moguls, Mobsters, Stars, Reds and Trade Unionists*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001.

warmly, "See you soon,"¹³⁷ which was inevitably true. Marlon Brando, perhaps the premier stage and screen star of the 20th Century, was known to donate substantial sums to the BPP, an occasional \$5000, for example.¹³⁸ Dalton Trumbo, possibly the most talented screenwriter the U.S. has developed—and a stalwart of the persecuted "Hollywood Ten" cineastes (and a Communist himself for a while)—rushed to the defense of Angela Davis with sage advice at a tense moment during her prosecution. The artists backing Davis included Jane Fonda, Donald Sutherland, Elliot Gould and Beah Richards.¹³⁹ Davis's attorney, Leo Branton, had to interrupt his representation of the estate of guitarist and singer Jimi Hendrix—he previously represented Communists during the Smith Act trial—but may have been best known for his counsel to singer and early television star, Nat "King" Cole.¹⁴⁰ (He was better known in other circles, along with his brother, top litigator Wiley Branton, as great-grandsons of Greenwood Le Flore, a Choctaw chief.)¹⁴¹ The BPP "could rely on" actor Jean Seberg, who also happened to be fluent in French, Spanish and Italian and thus was capable of opening doors in Europe.¹⁴² At one point, the FBI monitored her banking account and found a \$10,000 donation to the BPP.¹⁴³ Ossie Davis, the Black actor and writer, was known to be close to the CP's William Patterson;¹⁴⁴ in 1970 Newton gave him a profuse "thank you for the hospitality you extended to my comrades and myself when you allowed us to have the use of your home while we were in New York."¹⁴⁵ In 1972, the self-described "Queen Mother of Soul," Aretha Franklin, told BPP artist Emory Douglas, "I love what you are doing."¹⁴⁶

Undoubtedly, the chanteuse did not "love" another aspect of California uniqueness. According to Mitford, by the early 1970s the state hosted a "prison empire, the largest in the world with a population of 28,400 convicted felons."¹⁴⁷

137. Bert Schneider to Huey P. Newton, 25 August 1971, Reel 45, Black Panther Documents.

138. Talbot, *By the Light of Burning Dreams*, 86, 85: Kathleen Cleaver argues that Brando's electric portrayal in his signature role in *Burn!*, the epic about a Caribbean slave revolt, was shaped indelibly by studying Panthers at a session in the San Francisco apartment she shared with her then spouse, Eldridge Cleaver.

139. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 22 January 1971.

140. Transcript, 10 January 1972, Reel 7, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

141. "The Greenwood, Mississippi Story," undated, Box 1, Beverly Axelrod Papers.

142. Jean Russell Larson and Garry McGee, *Neutralized: The FBI v. Jean Seberg, a Story of the '60s Civil Rights Movement*, Albany, Ga.: Bear Manor, 2019, 49.

143. M. Wesley Swearingen, *FBI Secrets: An Agent's Exposé*, Boston: South End, 1995, 118.

144. Horne, *Black Revolutionary*, 2013.

145. Huey P. Newton to Ossie Davis, 17 December 1970, Reel 45, Black Panther Documents.

146. Aretha Franklin to Emory Douglas, 10 April 1972, Reel 14, Black Panther Documents. See also Cecil Ferguson, Oral History, 1990-92, UCLA: Suggested that this artist was influenced by the eminent painter from the Southland, Charles White, he of decided left-wing, even CP-affiliated ties.

147. Jessica Mitford, "Kind and Usual Punishment in California," *Atlantic Monthly*, March 1971, Box 5, Angela Davis Legal Defense Collection, Schomburg Center, Harlem, New York Public Library (abbrev. Angela Davis Legal Defense Collection). Cf. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 22 February 1971, Reel 55, Black Panther Documents: "State prison system—world's 3rd biggest..."

Simultaneously, another commentator estimated that 40% of prison inmates then in the state were Black, though this group was only 13% of the overall population.¹⁴⁸ Ironically, this harsh persecution served as a pipeline directing inmates into the arms of the BPP, which was heavily victimized by the proliferation of iron cages. Those like George Jackson, a formidable intellectual, then served as an example. Thus, when David Hilliard, in the pantheon of BPP leadership, found himself behind bars, his attorney was sure to ship him works by Tolstoy, the historian of slavery Kenneth Stampp, the sociologist of power, C. Wright Mills, Fanon (of course), Nietzsche, Hesse, Richard Wright and, naturally, Du Bois.¹⁴⁹ George Jackson asserted just before his death that it was in 1961 that he read Engels's classic *Anti-Dühring* and was bowled over.¹⁵⁰ According to Cleaver's biographer, San Quentin—the Northern California prison that paradoxically incubated radicalism—held a "vast library of thirty three thousand books...90 percent of inmates used the library."¹⁵¹ When Cleaver found himself at San Quentin in 1957, he also found a "branch of the Communist Party...I related to it and we had some good conversations. I learned a lot from all that."¹⁵² It was left to George Jackson to pose the query that the foregoing helps to answer: "Why do California joints [prisons] produce more Bunchy Carters and Eldridge Cleavers than those over the rest of the country?"¹⁵³

These prisons were also incubators for a certain masculinist orientation. This may also illuminate why the City of Angels preceded both New York and San Francisco in the struggle for Queer Rights,¹⁵⁴ in that heteronormativity was

148. Suzannah Lessard, review of *Soledad Brother*, *Washington Monthly*, November 1970, Box 6, Angela Davis Legal Defense Collection.

149. Allan Brotsky to David Hilliard, 20 December 1971, Reel 39, Black Panther Documents. See also *The Black Panther*, 6 March 1976, Newton: In the prelude to the 1966 founding of the party, he and Seale "read...Fanon...Mao...Che...we saw them as kinsmen.... 'Negroes with Guns' by Robert F. Williams had a great influence on the kind of party we developed." However, Newton disagreed with Williams on his appeal for aid from the federal government to intervene against Dixie; likewise he disagreed with Louisiana's Deacons for Defense when they moved similarly. But Malcolm X was the North Star as the BPP was a "living testament to his life's work...." Ditto the similarly named BPP in Lowndes County, Alabama.

150. *New York Times Book Review*, 13 June 1971.

151. Gifford, *Revolution or Death*, 73.

152. Lee Lockwood, *Conversation with Eldridge Cleaver, Algiers*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1971, 82.

153. Jackson, *Soledad Brother*, 17.

154. Daniel Hurewitz, *Bohemian Los Angeles and the Making of Modern Politics*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007, 12. Cf. Aaron Lecklider, *Love's Next Meeting: The Forgotten History of Homosexuality and the Left in American Culture*, Oakland: University of California Press, 2021. See *The Black Panther*, 21 August 1970. Interview with Newton, March-May 1972, Reel 12, Black Panther Documents: "75% of the prison population in San Luis [Obispo] are homosexual." See *The Black Panther*, 16 July 1977: Newton says, "80 percent of the inmates in the Penal Colony were homosexuals." *The Black Panther*, 16 April 1977: At SLO prison, "I found it hard to politicize men who lived largely for the next sexual encounter. To them sex is all...only political action brought quick, repressive steps...many guards were themselves homosexuals.... [Prisoner] salaries ranged from a minimum of three cents an hour to a maximum of ten cents an hour," possibly increasing

intensively challenged behind bars, as the following pages will indicate. This trend came to exclude Cleaver, who in his post-BPP retreat spoke of homosexuality as evil and the “work of Satan.”¹⁵⁵ As early as 1968, in bashing James Baldwin, he claimed that “many Negro homosexuals...are outraged and frustrated because in their sickness they are unable to have a baby by a white man.”¹⁵⁶ Cleaver was also a proud and unrepentant batterer of his spouse.¹⁵⁷

This was in sharp contrast to the outlook of his erstwhile sparring partner, Newton, who was truly in the vanguard on this matter,¹⁵⁸ and to a degree, the latter’s view was inconsistent with the then position of the CP.¹⁵⁹ Thus, Baldwin

prostitution. “Slavery and prison life” were comparable, he said: *The Black Panther*, 7 May 1977. And, yes, “promoting racial animosity in prison” was a primary goal, said Newton: *The Black Panther*, 14 May 1977. Newton’s stance was not without cost: See Celeste Welch of Detroit to Newton, 12 April 1973, Reel 36, Black Panther Documents: As to his assertion that Cleaver was a “latent homosexual. If Mr. Newton had any respect for Black people he wouldn’t have broadcasted such trash...has nothing to do with our struggle for liberation...Mr. Newton is a hypocritical person....” Cf. Lillian Faderman and Stuart Timmons, *Gay L.A.: A History of Sexual Outlaws, Power Politics and Lipstick Lesbians*, New York: Perseus, 2006, 116, 101-2: A founder of the early homophile group ONE was Merton Bird, a Negro accountant; this text also limns racism within this community.

155. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 13 May 1980, Reel 67, Black Panther Documents.

156. Cleaver, *Soul on Ice*, 102. Cf. Remarks of Lumumba Shakur, Panther defendant in 1970 in Manhattan, in *Look for Me in the Whirlwind*, 175-187, 184: “In prison you’re only a faggot or a homosexual if you play the role of the woman. Some faggots [*sic*] actually thought they were women and walked, talked and acted just like women.” See also Pharr, *Nine Lives*, 190: While jailed, this Panther recalled that inmates were “openly exposed to homosexuality,” and he was told it only took 90 days for a heterosexual man to become homosexual. Cf. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 1 March 1971, Reel 55, Black Panther Documents: “Sex fear among the cons...behind prison bars—homosexual attackers.” Cf. George Jackson in *The Black Panther*, 17 October 1970: Behind bars “they use the race issue like they use homosexuals to divide the prison population...it was all I could do to stay alive.”

157. Gifford, *Revolution or Death*, 266. As shall be seen, Cleaver—bizarrely, crudely and cruelly—was a proud rapist. Cf. Remarks of Cleaver, 27 May 1976, Series 2, Box 41, Newton Foundation: “Carolyn Craven...now...tv newscaster...used to scare me to death as an agent. She spread rumors all over the Bay Area in 1967-68 that I had raped...a lie.”

158. Andrew Lester, “‘This Was My Utopia’: Sexual Experimentation and Masculinity in the 1960s Bay Area Radical Left,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 29 (No. 3, September 2020), 364-387. For Newton on “Women’s Liberation and Gay Liberation Movements,” see *The Black Panther*, 21 August 1970. See *Los Angeles Free Press*, 6 November 1970: The Gay Liberation Front in L.A. “recognizes [BPP] as being vanguard of the people’s revolution in America.” See also Special Agent-San Francisco/FBI to J. Edgar Hoover, 31 August 1970, Reel 1, Black Panther Documents: Send a phony letter complaining about Newton’s overtures to the gay community stating, “Huey is wrong...” from a “Righteous Sister.”

159. Aptheker, *Communists in Closets*, 98: Harry Hay, a Communist in L.A., is viewed as a founder of the “Gay Rights Movement.” However, his advocacy of “Man-Boy Love” complicated his ties to his comrades. He “counseled sex with adolescent minors” in Aptheker’s words. Moreover, the Mattachine Society which he helped to found to press for human rights for this minority proclaimed in 1956 they were “unalterably opposed to Communists and Communist activity....” This stance complexified relations between the CP and this emerging movement. On the “North American Man Boy Love Association,” see Document 25 June 1977, Box 7, Harry Hay Papers, San Francisco Public Library (abbrev. Harry Hay Papers). At the same site and collection, see “Mattachine Review,” January 1956, Box 41.

expressed disdain for Cleaver's antediluvian posture but was appreciative of Newton.¹⁶⁰ Neither were Karenga's nationalist forces in the vanguard of feminism: He was to be convicted in 1971 of torture of Black women.¹⁶¹

Needless to say, the state was not helpful in aiding the emergence of feminism. The CP turncoat Anita Bell Schneider of San Diego recalled in 1957 that her comrades "told us to dress in as feminine way as possible because the American people think that [CP] women are somewhat masculine in appearance"; thus, they should slip on "high heels and...wear a hat with a feather in it" since "a policeman won't hit you with a club if you have a hat with a feather...and a veil"; also, "wear jewelry and silk stockings."¹⁶² Arguably, the threat of armed force discouraged women militants from breaking with traditional modes.

The BPP was uniquely suited to sift through these contradictions, for although they uplifted the "lumpen" as a generative force, their leadership was comprised heavily of organic and traditionally trained intellectuals. Newton, holder of a doctorate from the University of California Santa Cruz,¹⁶³ had a foot in both camps and during some of his well-compensated campus speeches often waxed philosophical as if he were an ebony version of Marcuse. This was facilitated by the Golden State's spectacular expansion of higher education as those like Newton were reaching adolescence. In his case, Merritt College—then at 5714 Grove in North Oakland¹⁶⁴—provided the atmosphere for the BPP's rise.¹⁶⁵ In 1969 BPP delegates spoke at 169 colleges, but in 1967 at only 11.¹⁶⁶

Even before Newton was born, i.e., by the end of the 1920s, the state had 15,000 students across 34 junior colleges, more than one-third of the country's junior college students though containing less than 5% of the nation's population.¹⁶⁷ This was occurring as the walls of Jim Crow were crumbling, energizing the BPP, and helping to deliver a major breakthrough: By December 1971, a Negro weekly in L.A. reported happily about a "survey of 543 community colleges" in "one of the most extensive modifications of curricula in junior colleges in 30 or 40 years," to wit, the "introduction of Black Studies." This had

160. James Baldwin, *Collected Essays*, New York: Library of America, 1998, 459.

161. *People v. Everett-Karenga, Fred Glover, Louis Smith and Luz Maria Tamayo*, Roll 183, Central Criminal, A264488-264709, A264545, Filed 28 May 1971, Testimony of Carlotta Mosley and Deborah Jones, Los Angeles County Archives.

162. Testimony of Anita Bell Schneider, 30 April 1957, in *Brownell v. CEDC*, Reel 27, Records of the Subversive Activities Control Board, 1950-1972, Part I: CPUSA, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Md.

163. Huey Percy Newton, "War Against the Panthers: A Study of Repression in America," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California Santa Cruz, 1980.

164. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 21 August 2023.

165. Donna Murch, *Living for the City: Migration, Education and the Rise of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010.

166. *The Black Panther*, 10 August 1974.

167. Malcolm Harris, *Palo Alto: A History of California, Capitalism and the World*, New York: Little Brown, 2023, 324.

significant intellectual impact and opened the door to hiring more Black faculty too.¹⁶⁸

As the number of Black students on campus rose, the opportunity for lucrative speaking fees to the BPP to keep them afloat rose accordingly. For example, by December 1970, the Center for Black Studies at the UC Santa Barbara campus offered Newton \$1000 for a lecture.¹⁶⁹ Correspondingly, as late as 1977 the FBI reportedly had 22 informants at the Berkeley campus as the story emerged of how they had "successfully infiltrated" the CP's Du Bois Clubs as early as the 1960s.¹⁷⁰

Other than the expansion of prisons and colleges in California, another impactful factor in the ascent of the BPP was the proliferation of wars necessitating more soldiers. By 1967, the *Los Angeles Sentinel*, the local Black weekly, asserted that the "death rate in Vietnam was proportionately higher for Negro than for white U.S. servicemen."¹⁷¹ By 1978, a few years after the U.S. ouster from Vietnam, the party's organ reported that 51% of army prisoners were Black, and 27% of those receiving a dishonorable discharge harming future employment plans.¹⁷²

Reginald "Malik" Edwards served in the U.S. military, recalling that he "trained in guerrilla warfare for two years at Camp Pendleton" in San Diego County, Calif., but after departing the ranks, he "took over the D.C. chapter," noting that "most of the Panther veterans then were [military] veterans."¹⁷³ He was hardly alone. The man then known as Elmer "Geronimo" Pratt had made 64 combat jumps and had earned a Purple Heart before he was 19; this military experience paid multiple dividends during a time when the BPP, of which he was a leader, engaged in an armed confrontation with the police.¹⁷⁴

It was not just military veterans that the BPP sought to shape. Cleaver in early 1970 appealed to "my black brothers in Vietnam...either quit the army now or start destroying them from the inside...stop killing the Vietnamese people," but

168. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 9 December 1971.

169. Milton White, Director of Center for Black Studies/UCSB, to Connie Matthews, 10 December 1970, Reel 52, Black Panther Documents.

170. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 2 December 1977.

171. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 2 March 1967.

172. *The Black Panther*, 1 December 1978.

173. Remarks by Reginald Edwards in Wallace Terry, *Bloods: Black Veterans of the Vietnam War: An Oral History of the Vietnam War by Black Veterans*, New York: Random House, 1984, 5, 12.

174. Olsen, *Last Man Standing*, 32. Also known variously as Geronimo ji Jaga, he also represents a trend that requires deeper exploration: African-Indigenous alliances over the centuries. See, e.g., undated pamphlet on ji Jaga, Vertical File-Geronimo Pratt, Freedom Archives, Berkeley: He is characterized as being of "Afrikan-Creek descent." See also *Right On!*, 29 February 1972, Reel 26, Black Panther Documents: "Geronimo Pratt" denoted as the "New Urban Guerrilla." Arafat, Oral History: "Geronimo prepared us pretty good...we would clean our guns. We would break 'em down, put them back together, assemble them...." (See above reference to CP and BPP attorney Leo Branton being of Black and Choctaw ancestry.)

instead "kill General Abrams and his staff" or "sabotage supplies...or turn them over to the Vietnamese"—and "Uncle Tom officers should be dealt with now."¹⁷⁵ As he spoke, at Subic Bay in the Philippines, a major launching pad for combat in Indo-China, a frequent venue for Black soldiers was the "Cloud Nine" bar, a "Black Panther oriented bar in Olongapo," according to one observer.¹⁷⁶ It is likely that the Black sailors who fought back against racism aboard U.S. military vessels in that vicinity or engaged in a sit-down strike off the coast of North Vietnam resonated somehow with Cleaver's pointed words.¹⁷⁷

Besides colleges, madcap prison construction and seemingly endless war, these factors alone would not have borne the Panthers but for the proliferation of weapons. Post-1945 the U.S. became home to nearly half of all civilian-owned firearms in the world; there were more weapons than citizens. As the Panthers began to get their hands on these guns, this led to the pioneering 1968 Gun Control Act. But as they faded into the sunset in the 1970s, this presumed incongruity with the fabled Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution lapsed into desuetude accordingly.¹⁷⁸

Still, the ultra-right continued growing in the Southland,¹⁷⁹ which at once was a factor calling forth a militant response by African Americans, their frequent target. The "Minute Men" too were armed, said to have a membership of 25,000 and quite active in San Diego.¹⁸⁰ Also in this border town was the "Secret Army Organization" which also was anti-Semitic and specialized in fire-bombings and burglaries.¹⁸¹ Suspiciously, their leader, Howard Godfrey, was said to be an informer for the FBI,¹⁸² which he denied.¹⁸³ "No locale could match the organized right wing activism found in Southern California in the 1960s" is the conclusion

175. Message from Eldridge Cleaver, 4 January 1970, Reel 9, Papers of the Revolutionary Action Movement, Ohio State University, Columbus.

176. Christopher Capozzola, *Bound by War: How the United States and the Philippines Built America's First Pacific Century*, New York: Basic, 2019, 288.

177. Marv Truhe, *Against All Tides: The Untold Story of the Kitty Hawk Race Riot*, Chicago: Lawrence Hill, 2023, 317.

178. Andrew C. McKeivitt, *Gun Country: Gun Capitalism, Culture and Control in Cold War America*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2023.

179. Felker-Kantor, *Policing Los Angeles*, 146: By the early 1970s, L.A. was preeminent in generating "right wing bombings," especially by the Klan and Nazis. See also Mufti, *American Caliph*, 155: During one 18-month period from 1971 to 1972 there were 2000 bombings in the U.S.

180. *New York Times*, 12 November 1961. The affluent suburb of La Jolla and other nearby adjacent areas of San Diego captured national headlines again in 1983 when Edward Lawson, a Black man, who had been detained and arrested by cops 15 times in two years on vagrancy charges simply while walking through town, prevailed at the U.S. Supreme Court, undermining statewide laws that gave the authorities broad power to demand identification from otherwise innocent pedestrians—often of African or Mexican ancestry: *San Diego Union*, 3 May 1983. See also the harassment of Fania Davis, sister of Angela, and her then partner, Sam Jordan in James, *Contextualizing Angela Davis*, 151-152.

181. *Oakland Tribune*, 6 February 1976.

182. *Los Angeles Times*, 26 January 1976.

183. *Oakland Tribune*, 7 January 1976.

of one study.¹⁸⁴ Yet in the long run this tendency may have backfired. When a police officer at UCLA was queried about the presence of Angela Davis and the pressure to repress those of her ilk, this Black man replied acerbically that that he would let higher authorities fret about that since "I have to worry about the Minute Men."¹⁸⁵

The uniqueness of the Southland—proximity to Mexico; proliferation of colleges; serpentine freeways; brutal cops; an empowered ultra-right—also served to propel both the CP and the BPP, as the ensuing pages will seek to show.

184. Kurt Schuparra, *Triumph of the Right: The Rise of the California Conservative Movement, 1945-1966*, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1998, xxi.

185. Notes by Doris Walker, 26 January 1972, Box 45, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

Chapter 1

The Wild West, 1850-1935

Why was it that some Black folk found it necessary to pick up the gun a century after Emancipation? Southern California was predisposed to give rise to this. Even before the U.S. takeover, by 1827 there was a massive revolt of the Chumash as they sought both freedom and land against the wishes of interlopers. Uniquely, the Golden State featured not only enslavement of Africans but also the Indigenous and, after Emancipation, bondage afflicted those of Chinese ancestry.¹ This triple slavery was veritably unique, helping to recreate a repressive infrastructure that relentlessly hounded all three victimized groups, creating a cyclonic feedback loop that swept them within its ambit. Yet Africans carried the added burden of not only being blamed for a bloody civil war but also the cause of spreading Euro-American impoverishment when the investment in their bodies was liquidated without compensation.

The Southland was not immune from this latter trend. As one commentator put it in 1856, "Los Angeles had its slave mart, as well as New Orleans and Constantinople."² An explicit and blood-soaked cry for genocide was made by Governor Peter H. Burnett in 1851, targeting the Indigenous, whose numbers dropped accordingly.³ Contrastingly, in 1858 the courageous Black woman Mary Ellen Pleasant departed for Canada to confer with John Brown who—anticipating the BPP—was to launch an armed assault against unfreedom. Like Newton's Hollywood funders, she provided Brown with a substantial amount, perhaps \$30,000—more than \$1 million in today's currency.⁴

As the Civil War erupted, anticipating the "Minute Men" and the "Secret Army Organization" of the coming century, the so-called "Los Angeles Mounted Rifles" were preparing to join the slaveholders' rebellion; others in the City of Angels devilishly shipped gold to the rebels as Washington had to divert valuable firepower west to suppress allies of enslavers.⁵

1. Jean Pfaelzer, *California, a Slave State*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2023, 71.

2. Amy Tanner Thiriot, *Slavery in Zion: A Documentary and Genealogical History of Black Lives and Black Servitude in Utah Territory, 1847-1862*, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2022, 140.

3. Benjamin Madley, *An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe, 1846-1873*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017.

4. Pfaelzer, *California, a Slave State*.

5. Pfaelzer, *California, a Slave State*, 221, 200.

The Golden State was in lockstep with Negro activism nationally in that the abolitionist William Wells Brown, as John Brown was mobilizing, announced, "Any enslaved person who took up arms to gain their freedom would be viewed as innocent in the eyes of God," a homily exemplified by the heroic Haitian Revolution, so inspiring for so many enslaved.⁶ Hearing this message, Negroes in Cincinnati fought back valiantly with arms in hand in the antebellum era against racist violence.⁷

Postwar Los Angeles, bathed as it was in an ocean of blood, displayed an extraordinary level of violence making the term "Wild West" seem mild by comparison. To say this town had the highest homicide rate in the U.S. between 1830 and 1880 somehow does not do justice to the tidal wave of bloodshed.⁸

But, as ever, there was a discernible contrary trend. Early on California was the site of a host of Utopian Socialist colonies, populated by settlers from the East seeking succor. Less than 200 miles north of L.A. was the Kaweah Colony, begun in 1886. Residents thought their cooperative commonwealth would seek to erode the innards of capitalism itself. Unfortunately, logging the majestic sequoias was a priority—though one of the largest of them all was indicatively named the "Karl Marx Tree." Then there was the Llano del Rio Colony near Palmdale, in the furthest reaches of L.A. County. It was founded by the Socialist politician, Job Harriman, whose credible attempt to become Mayor of L.A., was wounded severely by the bombing of the *Los Angeles Times* building in 1910. Yet these noble efforts unavoidably bequeathed more than a scintilla of working-class radicalism that was to be reborn in the 1930s.⁹

The arrival of motion pictures, which was to define the land, brought no surcease. By early 1915 the Vice President of the local branch of the NAACP in Los Angeles, Dr. J.A. Somerville, was protesting vigorously the impending "exhibition" of the horrifically racist movie to be dubbed *The Birth of a Nation*. With barely suppressed fury he decried the fact that "the cause of the North is belittled" during the relatively recent civil war and "the Negro is made to look hideous," which was "untimely, unfortunate and unwise," all "designed to palliate and excuse the lynchings."¹⁰ In short, with the advent of movies, the Southland

6. Leslie Alexander, *Fear of a Black Republic: Haiti and the Birth of Black Internationalism in the United States*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2023, 182.

7. Nikki Taylor, "'Frontiers of Freedom': The African-American Experience in Cincinnati, 1802-1862," Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 2001.

8. Marne Campbell, *Making Black Los Angeles: Class, Gender and Community, 1859-1919*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016, 109.

9. *Los Angeles Times*, 14 August 2023. See also Pat Rausch, "An Inside Look at the Llano Colony," 8 June 1967, Box 4, Frances Nacke Noel/Job Harriman Papers, Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif. (abbrev. Noel/Harriman Papers).

10. Letter from Dr. Somerville, 2 February 1915, Part I, Box C299, NAACP Papers-LC. See also J. Alexander and Vada Somerville, *Oral History*, 1966, California State University Fullerton (abbrev. CSU-Fullerton). He arrived in the Southland in 1902 and happened to be a Seventh Day Adventist.

was becoming a chancre that was to poison the nation, then the world. Association attorney, E. Burton Ceruti, lamented the fact that "the film" was "made here," but the Black community seized the opportunity to protest, gaining practice and experience in becoming a national leader.¹¹

Dr. Somerville, a founder of the branch, considered it to be a "militant group," not a trait one would expect to be touted by the first Negro graduate of the Dental School of the University of Southern California (his spouse was the second). He arrived in the Southland from Jamaica in 1903, almost 20 years after his birth and found that there were "less than six thousand colored people" present, meaning there were "no so-called Negro districts" as they "lived all over the city."¹²

Yet immediately formidable barriers asserted themselves. The overwhelmed national office, sagging under a burden of fighting lynching and voting transgressions, reminded the Southlanders that "we are working against desperate odds," so do not expect a rush of external aid.¹³ At least, however, leaders including Du Bois, Joel Spingarn and Oswald Villard all weighed in rhetorically.¹⁴

This cinematic defamation was just an opening shot in an ongoing barrage. James Weldon Johnson, Association leader nationally, was told of yet another, *Free and Equal*, described as the "most vicious picture I have ever seen," according to attorney E. Burton Ceruti. He wanted to "drive through the City Council a special ordinance" which would have "enabled the city officials to forbid the production."¹⁵ Remarkably, by June 1921 the NAACP was claiming that a notably obnoxious film was to be destroyed pursuant to action by the mayor of Los Angeles and Hollywood executives and would be barred minimally from the Golden State.¹⁶

It was explosive to produce racist movies in a region where—not so long ago—Confederate forces were mobilizing. Ceruti wanted to send material on this fraught matter to Association headquarters; he wanted to "telegraph this request but [would] prefer not to make [a] record of activities in [the] telegraph office," lest the ultra-right be alerted.¹⁷

11. E. Burton Ceruti to May Childs Nerney, 2 February 1915, Part I, Box C299, NAACP Papers-LC. Ceruti expired prematurely due to heart failure in 1927. Born in the Bahamas in 1874, he was wavy-haired and light skinned, not unlike a host of Southland Negro leaders including H. Claude Hudson, future Congressman Augustus Hawkins and Mervyn Dymally (roots in Trinidad), and others. See *California Eagle*, 25 March 1927, Part I, Box G16, NAACP Papers-LC. Dymally, befitting his South Caribbean roots, also had South Asian roots. The year of Ceruti's death, the Association branch in L.A. was said to have attracted a "Hindu" member, attorney S.G. Pandit: See Emma Lou Sayers to Robert Bagnall, 22 September 1927, Part I, Box G16, NAACP Papers-LC.

12. J.A. Somerville, *Man of Color: An Autobiography*, Los Angeles: Morrison, 1949, 81, 144, 151.

13. May Childs Nerney to E. Burton Ceruti, 25 February 1915, Part I, Box C299, NAACP Papers-LC.

14. Statement from Du Bois, et al., 11 March 1915, Part I, Box C299, NAACP Papers-LC.

15. E. Burton Ceruti to James Weldon Johnson, 5 January 1918, Part II, Box A38, NAACP Papers-LC.

16. Report, June 1921, Part II, Box A274, NAACP Papers-LC.

17. E. Burton Ceruti to James Weldon Johnson, 23 May 1921, Part I, Box G15, NAACP Papers-LC.

This episode placed the branch in a flattering light—but too was a premonition of unflattering trends to come, which laid the foundation for the BPP decades later to begin to trumpet the presumed virtues of the lumpen. For just as Dr. Somerville, a prominent local dentist, had spoken out, another observer noticed that already there was “some degree of dissatisfaction among some among some of our most promising future members. Some seemed to think that our branch should be made up of ‘the most prominent families.’”¹⁸

This class bias was to dog the Association for decades to come, creating an opening for the professed working-class approach of the then emerging Communist Party. The problem with this bias—among others—was that racist terror was then afflicting *all* Negroes, mandating multi-class unity, making the NAACP somewhat dysfunctional. Due east in Riverside, by 1921, Percy Carter, branch secretary, was moaning about a factor that trailed Negroes for decades: “burning of our homes” was a constant menace, along with “threats against our lives...our president was discharged from his work and I was threatened to lose my work as well as bodily injury.” As in L.A., there was a “Klan...in town,” meaning “people are all scared” since these miscreants “interfered with us in more ways than one.”¹⁹ As 1921 wound down, Riverside denizens were lamenting that “it has been a year of continuous battle,” including “looking after the interest of the colored children” in nearby “Imperial Valley as there is gross discrimination in the public schools in this vicinity which is stric[tly] settled by southern whites,” a product of migratory geography. In Blythe, scores of miles east of Los Angeles, a “colored man was arrested,” then “sentenced to jail for sixty days with no alternative [but] to pay his [punishing] fine” since “an attempt was made to sell his water right off the land and foreclose a...mortgage on some livestock”²⁰—legalized theft, in other words. Even before the recognition of what came to be called the “Prison Industrial Complex”—or the “New Jim Crow”²¹—decades later, as early as the 1920s glimmerings of it were detected, including the note from San Diego that “in one of the prisons, a little *colored* woman, is the leader,” a dubious distinction but utterly predictable.²² [emphasis-original]

But San Diego faced a peculiar set of circumstances, for local activists also had to confront the reality that one compatriot, Chester Carrolton, was “confined in the Tijuana jail for a year without trial,”²³ requiring some foreign policy expertise to spring him. He had been behind bars a lengthy 11 months as of 1924.

18. Walter McDonald to Mary [sic] Childs, 12 July 1915, Part I, G23, NAACP Papers-LC.

19. Percy Carter to Mary White Ovington, 23 July 1921, Part I, Box G22, NAACP Papers-LC.

20. Riverside Branch to James Weldon Johnson, 30 November 1921, Part I, Box G22, NAACP Papers-LC.

21. Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Color-Blindness*, New York: New Press, 2010.

22. Charlotte L. P. Stearns to Mary White Ovington, 12 February 1920, Part I, Box G22, NAACP Papers-LC.

23. Assistant Secretary to E.J. Gentry, 29 March 1924, Part I, Box G22, NAACP Papers-LC.

"I slayed a policeman on duty," he confessed, but "it was self defense." Prodding the NAACP, he insisted "[I] have always been a race man" and "last year during Dr. Du Bois' western trip he was here to see me." Reflecting on anti-Yanqui attitudes across the border, he conceded that it was "impossible [for] an American to get a fair trial in this country without aid," especially for one like himself who had served in the U.S. armed forces as a sergeant. So the beset prisoner escaped northward—but then wound up in Seattle, where he was detected and faced extradition to Mexico.²⁴

Yet San Diego as a naval bulwark also had a complement of Negro sailors who had traversed the planet and thus had a basis for comparison. One of these men, after first briefing Robert Bagnall on a local newspaper, the "San Diego Ledger...organ of the colored people of San Diego and Imperial counties," apprised him that he was a "retired steward in the U.S. Navy.... I have visited every country in the world," he claimed, "and nowhere is the black man persecuted as he is in the 'land of the free and home of the brave.'" Thus, he contended, "I have felt the iron heel of racial discrimination and oppression while wearing the uniform of my government and I promised the God who gives me life to give of my time and dollars to fight down this dreadful evil—and give until it hurts."²⁵

This kind of passion imbued those who arose under different circumstance as the Cold War altered the balance of global forces, putting gusty winds in the sails of anti-Jim Crow advocates.²⁶ And, as shall be seen, Black military men in Camp Pendleton in the San Diego vicinity played a pivotal role in this process.

"Always Vigilant," rendered in Latin, was the motto inscribed on the seal of this town hugging the border, which was appropriate for Negroes to heed given the difficulties they encountered there. Some of these problems were generated internally, for example in 1927, when Viola Jefferson, secretary of the local branch, groused that a recent Du Bois visit "created a measure of dissatisfaction" since it "[came] under the auspices of the Young Peoples Association," which was in sharp conflict with the larger body with the nub of the matter being the venue.²⁷ Actually, as Du Bois hinted, the issue may have been the topic of his lecture, a topic that would remain controversial by the time of the creation of the BPP: "Russia."²⁸

The Southland observer Charlotte L.P. Stearns by 1920 was becoming increasingly exasperated, noting that the branch in Los Angeles had "some good

24. Chester Carrolton to NAACP, 29 January 1924, Part I, Box G22, NAACP Papers-LC.

25. Edward Limber [?] to Robert Bagnall, 10 December 1925, Part I, Box G22, NAACP Papers-LC.

26. See, e.g., Gerald Home, *Black and Red: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Afro-American Response to the Cold War, 1944-1963*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986.

27. Viola Jefferson to James Weldon Johnson, 11 February 1927, Part I, Box G22, NAACP Papers-LC.

28. W.E.B. Du Bois to Viola Jefferson, 26 January 1927, Part I, Box G22, NAACP Papers-LC.

colored people but not enough active white" members, while Riverside was "not letting *women* do enough; whereas Los Angeles women are quite prominent." Pasadena, the growing bastion of the newly wed and nearly dead, "does not make white members prominent enough...Santa Monica has no white members," anticipating its future rapacious gentrification. "San Bernardino has some good colored women; white members not much in evidence. *All* these associations have colored presidents; and many of them antagonize their white members"²⁹—perhaps by not bowing to patronizing and condescending? In sum, even before the fissures that were thought to have disrupted inter-racialism decades later that prepared the path for the BPP, this trend was in evidence early on. [emphasis-original]

Thus, the socialist comrade of Du Bois, the Euro-American NAACP leader Mary White Ovington, sought to visit the region. Stearns noticed that "only Los Angeles and Riverside had applied *definitely* that they would help with Miss Ovington's expenses. Most have not replied *at all*." [emphasis-original] This was the case though the diligent Stearns not only contacted Pasadena, Long Beach, Santa Monica, Riverside and the Imperial Valley but also Vallejo and Sacramento, hundreds of miles to the north.³⁰

A turning point for the Los Angeles branch occurred in 1923 when the light-skinned dentist, H. Claude Hudson—born in 1886 in Louisiana—fled to the Southland, where he led NAACP forces by 1924 and proceeded to do so virtually until his death a century after his birth. He was the prototypical middle-class leader and networker, able to pivot leftward when compelled but otherwise remaining in a safely centrist groove. Two decades after his arrival in Los Angeles, as anti-fascism remained relevant, he was able to found Broadway Federal Savings and Loan, with the help of the similarly liberal politico Helen Gahagan Douglas, soon to be victimized by the then youthful knife-fighter, Richard M. Nixon. But as he cooled his heels in jail, a rite of passage, it seemed, for Black Angelenos, the wealth of banking seemed far distant. He had sought to desegregate Manhattan Beach by "going into the ocean" there, a faux pas since "they had a rule," he recalled years later, "there were restrictions out in the ocean, you couldn't go swimming.... I was at that time president of the Los Angeles branch and we were trying to break down that restriction. A group of seven or eight of us went swimming and we were all put in jail"—to be discussed below. Even after departing his iron cage, he had to endure "crank calls. The Ku Klux [Klan] and other racists would telephone that they were going to get me. I remember," he said, still confounded, "Mrs. Hudson and I were at a program at Hollywood High School and they paged us to come home at once. We had a young

29. Charlotte L. P. Stearns to Mary White Ovington, 24 May 1920, Part I, Box G22, NAACP Papers-LC.

30. Charlotte L. P. Stearns to Thomas M. Jackson, 18 January 1921, Part I Box G22, NAACP Papers-LC.

girl, a high school girl, babysitting with our children and the Ku Klux had telephoned and said they were on their way to get us. In her fright she ran out with the children like a hen with chickens." Fortunately, it was a false alarm," but we found her about a block and a half away from our home with the little children all huddled around her and she was frightened to death...those things happened."

Dr. Hudson attracted negative attention because of his effectiveness. Soon, in an epochal statewide trend, the L.A. branch under his guidance—which had been "second to...San Francisco"—soared beyond that fogbound metropolis where theretofore "the main activities" were centered. By 1927 the shift occurred which, he said, brought "attention of me throughout the nation," catapulting him into national leadership—a feat bolstered by his gaining a law degree from Loyola of L.A. by 1931—and finally, "president emeritus." Membership had been less than a thousand, he said, when he first led the branch, but "we went up about five thousand" soon, "which was a remarkable thing at that time."³¹

Dr. Hudson acknowledged the obvious: "swimming is such a delicate [case] in the eyes of the American white man that if we force a decision...probably an adverse one, [this] will set a precedent for all forms of segregation cases throughout California,"³² fomenting what was to be normative by the 1960s: the much feared "white backlash."

More than a half century had passed since the Civil War, but still fresh was the notion that the "ruling race" objected—at times violently—to challenges to the racist status quo. Thus, after the predictable had occurred—a young Negro slain by a cop—Dr. Somerville, branch leader in L.A., counseled a gathering to "'forget 'what had happened,'" echoes of which contributed to the arrival of the BPP. A "furor" exploded among the 500 in attendance.³³ Even then the branch was dominated by what were described demurely as "differences of opinion" between the dueling light-skinned dentists—Somerville and Hudson—while their treasurer, Frank Harvey, was dubbed "one of the few wealthy Negroes in Los Angeles."³⁴ Again, this class orientation both paved the way for the emergence of the working-class intellectuals that came to dominate the BPP. But as that class, overall, was forced into retreat during the Red Scare, it allowed for the disastrous celebration of the "lumpen." And not coincidentally, as Jim Crow barriers eroded societally, Dr. Somerville began to profit within a segregated Black community. By 1928 he had completed construction of what he called the "finest hotel in America catering to colored people"³⁵—41st and Central was the locale, later a hotspot for the BPP. (That he gained wealth because of the strictures of Jim Crow

31. H. Claude Hudson, Oral History, 29 November 1966, CSU-Fullerton (abbrev. Hudson, Oral History).

32. H. Claude Hudson to Walter White, 14 January 1927, Part I, Box G 16, NAACP Papers-LC.

33. Minutes of L.A. branch, 14 August 1927, Part I, Box G16, NAACP Papers-LC.

34. Emma Lou Sayers, 22 September 1927, Part I, Box G16, NAACP Papers-LC.

35. Somerville, *Man of Color*, 125-126.

should be referenced when considering his lethargy in confronting the police terror that underpinned U.S. apartheid.)

But Dr. Hudson well knew that contemporaneous events were his handmaiden, boosting his rising profile. For shortly after he took the reins of leadership, yet another medic—Dr. Ossian Sweet of Detroit—became a hero in Black America when he chose to pick up the gun, enthralling this persecuted minority. “A mob came to drive him out of [his] home,” said Hudson, “and he fired out in the crowd, killing a couple and wounding several others. And that gave a terrific impetus to the work of the Association,” he added tellingly, “because we knew that if you come and drive a man out of this house you can come drive him out of the other house.... When I saw the morning paper where Sweet had fired into the mob and killed a couple of people and the police—it took the police to keep them from rushing his home and killing him, I said to my wife, ‘This is a case we are going to have to defend. ’And I went immediately to my office and told him, ‘Sweet must be defended. Los Angeles will pledge one thousand dollars to his defense. ’Well, a thousand dollars was a lot of money” but national leader Walter White sensed “if Los Angeles,” the self-appointed vanguard, “could raise money every other city [could and] they published my telegram, made a facsimile of it and money started rolling in from all over the country,” as armed self-defense was perceived as mandatory. “Then,” Hudson continued, “we secured the services of Clarence Darrow and succeeded in having Sweet acquitted and establishing a precedent that if a man had to kill somebody [rushing into] his home, that the NAACP would come to his rescue,” also incidentally establishing a precedent useful for the BPP. “We haven’t had any trouble with that since,”³⁶ referring, perhaps inaccurately, to a forceful entry into a Negro’s home.

Remarkably, the Sweet imbroglio led directly to the formation of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, which was to produce Thurgood Marshall, the first Black U.S. Supreme Court Justice, as a still stunning \$75,000 was raised initially. This celebration of armed self-defense in the 1920s sheds light on why the BPP gained altitude so rapidly by 1966.³⁷

* * *

San Diego—the right-wing anchor of the region whose influence was to seep into Orange County—then had a population of 100,000, with 3000 Negroes by one estimate. Yet despite the paltry numbers, a clash had devolved, once again

36. Hudson, Oral History.

37. Nicholas Johnson, *Negroes and the Gun: The Black Tradition of Arms*, Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus, 2014, 201.

anticipating struggles thought widely to be of 1960s origin. W. Lloyd Johnson, publisher of the Negro weekly, the *San Diego Eagle*, said huffily that "we fail to understand the inconsistency of this local branch, when they make a plea for a colored recreational center," sensing this was a premature burst of Black Nationalism. After all, he said, "the avenues of social service are all practically open to the public, viz.: playgrounds, hotels, parks and restaurants which are open to the public with the very few exceptions"³⁸—so why construct separate venues enhancing Black difference?

E.J. Gentry and another comrade howled in protest in their response to James Weldon Johnson. "His statement is absolutely untrue," they blared. They raised the flag that was to be unfurled repeatedly in coming years: "He is a newcomer," they said, seething, "yet he has been here long enough to know San Diego is a very prejudiced city. Colored people are not allowed in drugstores, nor can they rent bathing suits at any bathing house or beach"; the voluble Johnson "does not belong to our branch and has declined to become a member" and, anyway, "we only have 1200 colored people in San Diego"³⁹—not 3000. The woman known as Mrs. C.H. Dodge chimed in, adding that "there is not a hall or building owned by colored people in [this] city not even a clubhouse. Whenever we want a place for amusement we have to rent from the white race," and that circumstance led to "no thought of racial segregation" since what came to be called "whiteness" was normalized under settler colonialism, while "blackness" was objectified. Unsurprisingly, she concluded, "the Garvey Movement," which stressed Black construction, "had crippled our branch."⁴⁰

Yet Gentry's huffiness aside, the non-member, Johnson prevailed since NAACP leadership reminded the branch leader that it was improper for locals to "have as its object the raising of funds for a segregated community house...[the National Office] does not approve."⁴¹ The elusive goal of racial integration prevailed over Black Nationalism, until the dam burst in the 1960s.

Despite the happy talk of the local Negro publisher, reality continued to intrude. A few years after his intervention, Viola Jefferson, then serving as branch secretary, was embroiled in a bitter contretemps that was to lead to removal of signs that say "Negro trade not solicited...we desire the patronage of white people only...colored trade not desired." (Apparently these businesses were unaware of the dictum of bourgeois economists that the lust for profit would override this raw bigotry.) Typically, these racist capitalists sought to export their bile, for in Tijuana, she said, "several business places operated by American whites" sought to display such signage, causing her and her entourage to confer with the mayor,

38. W. Lloyd Johnson to National Office, 22 January 1924, Part I, Box G22, NAACP Papers-LC.

39. E.J. Gentry, et al., to James Weldon Johnson, 7 February 1924, Part I, Box G22, NAACP Papers-LC.

40. Mrs. C.H. Dodge to James Weldon Johnson, 8 April 1924, Part I, Box G22, NAACP Papers-LC.

41. Director of Branches to E.J. Gentry, 18 February 1924, Part I, Box G22, NAACP Papers-LC.

who agreed that this was a blatant violation of Mexican law and action would be taken "immediately" to that end. But weeks later the signs remained since "mysterious influence had been brought to bear." Thus, she and her comrades appealed to the governor of Baja California, who instructed the police chief to remove this odiousness forthwith. (Consistent with this regression, Jefferson also reported the disturbing case of Zelna Diggs, a Negro maid who been cheated in Coronado, the resort city in San Diego Bay, who was held in bondage by a Euro-American female boss.)⁴²

Uniquely nationally, but par for the course in San Diego, it was in the 1920s that the branch found it necessary to organize a "Spanish class" in the "basement of the Calvary Baptist Church for Negro adults." But again a pinched view of "integration" intervened, for it was added starchily that the "NAACP does not intend to stop until it has done away with the segregated Spanish class."⁴³ Simultaneously, the president of the branch continued to bombard the governor of Baja California with complaints about "discrimination against colored persons by...merchants [in] Tijuana."⁴⁴ Possibly, the overriding issues helped to explain why, by early 1930 in San Diego, a report emerged that "our last branch meeting was a record breaker, both in interest and attendance."⁴⁵

The impetus of Negroes to seek to escape bruising confrontations with those once thought to be the "ruling race" would not be easy to squelch or squash. According to Dr. Hudson, upon arriving in L.A. in 1924, "the first thing we had to do was combat a movement to create separate schools. I had just left Louisiana where you had separate schools and I came out here and found that they were making a pitch for separate schools." Strikingly, it was not statewide, it "was here in Los Angeles...in Los Angeles County." At that juncture, he recalled, "you only had one school that had Negro teachers and that was Holmes Avenue. And as a bait or an incentive for colored people to ask for separate schools, they were saying that they would give you Jefferson High School and give you other schools, which would be all colored and that would give Negro children and young people an opportunity to teach," i.e., state enforced segregation versus Negro self-determination. "My argument against that was, how could they give us Jefferson when we had Jefferson already? Because we could go to Jefferson and you could go to Manual [Arts High School]...and Los Angeles High," meaning "they would give us one, but they'd let us have one that we already had and take the other five away from us,"⁴⁶ to which he objected stridently.

42. Viola Jefferson to James Weldon Johnson, 30 May 1927, Part I, Box G22, NAACP Papers-LC.

43. Report, ca. 1929, Part I, Box G22, NAACP Papers-LC.

44. Report, 31 August 1929, Part I, Box G22, NAACP Papers-LC.

45. Mrs. J.E. Craft, president of San Diego branch, to Robert Bagnall, 19 February 1930, Part I, Box G22, NAACP Papers-LC.

46. Hudson, Oral History.

However, unlike a good deal of the nation, by 1920 Beatrice Thompson, branch secretary and sited at 1833 W. 23rd Street, was embroiled in a "general discussion relative to 'separate schools for Mexicans,'" yet "another angle of the Color Question." Meanwhile there were "separate schools for Japanese" that were "discussed at other meetings." Wisely, she sensed that "sentiment for both is increasing which will eventually affect us" in that "Mexican and Japanese Questions are getting very acute in this state" but this "tended to divert the public mind from us temporarily."⁴⁷

She knew all too well that "the Japanese Question is being made an issue in this [electoral] campaign in California and I have been active in assisting them to defeat a measure which is...unjust and prompted by racial antagonism." The slogan was blunt, "Keep California white," which did not bode well for her constituency. Yet "with the exception of a Japanese speaker," she noted, "the Branch has taken no active part,"⁴⁸ a level of separatism that both prefigured a more muscular Black Nationalism of the 1960s and prepared the ground for the rise of the more internationalist BPP.

Thompson's posture was inconsistent with that of her ostensible leader, Du Bois, who near that time remarked, upon reaching the Pacific Coast, "here I...realized how California faces the newest color problem, the problem of the relation of the Orient and Occident. The colored people of California do not realize the bigness of this problem and their own logical position."⁴⁹ At least certain "colored people" were unaware.

Yet despite the gloom by early 1922, the San Diego branch was able to chalk up a victory against yet another menace; as a journalist put it, they won a "hard fight of longstanding...swimming pools now open to all citizens."⁵⁰

This was a longstanding issue in the sunny Southland, especially since it broached the sensitive issue of scantily clad young men and women possibly cavorting across the minefield that was the color line. Early on, according to Dr. Hudson in L.A., "whites and Negroes went into the swimming pools together and we made an old minister, a Congregational Minister by name of Dr. E.P. Ryland...the head of the Parks Commission." But he flipped: "the first thing he did was to offer a resolution segregating Negroes in the parks. We could go to Exposition Park on Monday"—hard by the lily-white University of Southern California campus—"because after Monday they'd clean the park and put fresh water in it," obviating purported contamination. "The only one place we could go to swim at any time was down on Vignes Street near the gas company." Thus, "we fought that for about five or six years," then finally they "got the [City] Council

47. Report by Beatrice Thompson, 10 April 1920, Part II, Box A38, NAACP Papers-LC.

48. Beatrice Thompson to James Weldon Johnson, 30 October 1920, Box Part II, Box A38, NAACP Papers-LC.

49. Campbell, *Making Black Los Angeles*, 193.

50. Clipping, 23 February 1922, Part I, Box G22, NAACP Papers-LC.

to pass a law opening the swimming pools and playgrounds to everybody alike. That was a fight that took a great deal of money and interest and time, and rallied all of us together.”⁵¹ And yet by the Summer of 1927, with the adroit aid of Hugh MacBeth, premier Black attorney born in 1884, Dr. Hudson was able to announce that the “Manhattan Beach fight” was “won only forty five days from the first intimidation of colored citizens,” meaning a “complete victory.”⁵² This latest win was prompted by a twist by the crafty racists; as Hudson put it, they attempted to “keep us out of the ocean by leasing municipal beaches to private individuals.”⁵³

Typically, however, Hudson may have been overly optimistic, for near East 22nd Street near Central Avenue in a neighborhood described as occupied by “white, colored, Mexican and Japanese” denizens, there was a “swimming pool placarded ‘for Negroes only’”⁵⁴—continuing stigmatizing of the descendants of the enslaved for having the gumption to battle for freedom and deprive enslavers of misbegotten wealth. It was also an aspect of a post-World War I exodus to the Southland,⁵⁵ often overlooked because of the greater influx during and after World War II.

Even then the cleavages within the Association manifested. Emma Boyd of Riverside was irate about “a few of our own race joining with the opposing side [of] white people and trying to make a gentleman’s agreement that we accept one day in [the] pool which is Monday.” As ever, there were those who were “afraid to stand for what is right if the white man says it is wrong.”⁵⁶ This unlaudable trait also paved the way for the Panthers.

Seemingly in instinctive fashion, the authorities, it was thought, sought to manipulate other ethnic groups against the Negroes. Floyd Covington, industrial secretary of the Urban League, detected “gestures of intimidation on the part of the Pullman Company to weaken the status” of the overwhelmingly Negro Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. As he saw it, that was the upshot of hiring “a few Filipinos working on the Buffet cars running out of San Francisco;” however, he seemed to find less displeasing that “Chinese maids” on the “Overland Limited from San Francisco to Chicago,” nine in toto, were “no longer working.”⁵⁷

This was noticeably troubling for, as the Association attorney confided, Negroes in the Southland were “surrounded by hostile sentiment.”⁵⁸

51. Hudson, Oral History.

52. Dr. Hudson to H.J. Seligman, 20 August 1927, Part I, Box G16, NAACP Papers-LC.

53. Dr. Hudson to James Weldon Johnson, 10 August 1927, Part I, Box G16, NAACP Papers-LC.

54. *California Eagle*, 14 January 1927.

55. *California Eagle*, 23 January 1927.

56. Emma Boyd to Robert Bagnall, 9 May 1925, Part I, Box G22, NAACP Papers-LC.

57. Report from Floyd Covington, 28 January 1929, Part I, Box D31, National Urban League Papers, LC (abbrev. National Urban League Papers).

58. E. Burton Ceruti to James Weldon Johnson, 25 April 1918, Part II, Box A38, NAACP Papers-LC.

By 1922 the Ku Klux Klan was "growing alarmingly strong in this community and have openly threatened," it was said, "E.B. Ceruti and Mrs. H.C. Branch [white] one of our Board members." The "trial" of the KKK after their illicit "Inglewood raid was a farce and they have been working openly ever since."⁵⁹

The Klan, in sum, remained a material force in the region. By April 1925 B.K. Edmonds of the Santa Monica branch was upset since the "KKK of Los Angeles caused the arrest of the 'Los Angeles Eagle,'" a Negro newspaper, "on criminal libel charges"; the "purpose was to prevent the publication" of news "on the misdeeds of the KKK against the colored people." Ironically, Watts, the future symbol of Black militancy, was one of the citadels of these terrorists. "They tried to compel the colored people of Watts to vote for [Klan] candidates," then "tried to prevent them from holding political meetings in their churches." Charlotta Bass, then a titan with the *Eagle*—and a future comrade of Paul Robeson and the left—was at the forefront of this battle, but the Association was balking at her prominence, which was made worse by the fact that "white papers here when giving out news concerning the KKK always justify them."⁶⁰

The importance of the Southland to the national struggle was signaled when Ceruti ascended to national leadership, but his presence did not halt the onslaught. The Association was "fighting...police charges of torture of Negroes in Los Angeles" in an "effort to extort confessions." It involved "four policemen of Long Beach" who were "disguised in the Ku Klux hoods and robes," then "kidnapped three Negro prisoners from" the "City Jail," then "threatened lynching" while seeking to "extort a confession of burglary." There was, quite chillingly, the "placing of a rope around the neck," and the "firing of a pistol in the direction of...prisoners..."⁶¹ By late 1918 and early 1919, California, said Ceruti, had "more branches and more members either New York or Massachusetts," an earnest of both activism and repression and a token of underrepresentation in that the Bay State then had three delegates on the National Board.⁶²

Ideological weakness aside, by 1922 the Santa Monica Bay branch was "again functioning," according to J. Allen Reese of Venice, with "77 memberships...secured" and the "prospect of 23 more" soon.⁶³ Up the road in Santa Barbara, by 1924 headquarters had noticed the branch's "excellent record in securing 95½% of the colored population" there to "join," under the leadership

59. Letter to Robert Bagnall, 20 December 1922, Part I, Box G15, NAACP Papers-LC.

60. B.K. Edmonds to James Weldon Johnson, 24 June 1925, Part I, Box G25, NAACP Papers-LC.

61. Press Release, 5 December 1924, Part I, Box G15, NAACP Papers-LC.

62. E. Burton Ceruti to J.R. Shillady, 19 January 1919, Part II, Box A38, NAACP Papers-LC.

63. J. Allen Reese to Robert Bagnall, 23 May 1922, Part I, Box G25, NAACP Papers-LC.

of an A.M.E. pastor. Moreover, said the branch leader, "we have a large Jewish population here" boding well for membership growth.⁶⁴

* * *

The NAACP was not the sole group crusading for Negro rights during this tempestuous year. Marcus Garvey's legions had sunk roots in the Southland⁶⁵ and, anticipating the BPP's internationalism, as early as 1928 the Universal Negro Improvement Association had filed a petition at the League of Nations in an attempt to improve the human rights climate for Negroes.⁶⁶ Not coincidentally, there was a UNIA branch in Oakland—the BPP headquarters—as early as 1928.⁶⁷

Yet Garvey was deported from the U.S. in the 1920s and although his organization survived him, there is little doubt that his removal was a mighty blow wielded against the fortunes of the UNIA. By 1934 Black Communist leader, James Ford, was—said an observant journalist—"heckled, booed, hissed by Garveyites" and was "unable to finish [his] prepared address" in New York City—even though these forces had "tolerated" the notorious Negro Conservative George Schuyler.⁶⁸

Yet, when one door closes, another opens and that is one way to view the post-1917 surfacing of the U.S. Communist Party, inspired by the Bolshevik Revolution and the creation of the Soviet Union. During the 1951-1952 Smith Act trial that decapitated the party in the Golden State, a topic for discussion was a volume, produced by the comrades, detailing their post-1919 landmarks. Party Chairman in the City of Angels was Pettis Perry, whose eminence was signaled when he was placed on trial in New York City, detailed as he had been by the "fascist like Red Squad" of the Los Angeles Police Department, which kept him on the backfoot as a matter of course. Alongside the "union hating policy of the *Los Angeles Times*," and often in league with the "underworld," all these forces were "on the same side of the fence," it was alleged.

Matters were so horrendous that by 1929, according to Perry, "civil rights were non-existent" in Los Angeles, given "raid after raid" by the Red Squad, with a "large share of the oppression...directed against the Negro people." The bald-

64. Letter to J.H. Wilson, Secretary of Santa Barbara NAACP, 24 November 1924, Part I, Box G25, NAACP Papers-LC.

65. Emory Tolbert, *The UNIA and Black Los Angeles*, Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies, UCLA, 1980.

66. UNIA Petition, 1928, Vertical File, AAMLO.

67. Ibid., Kent Rasmussen to Beatrice Traposso, n.d.

68. Clipping, *Baltimore Afro-American*, 18 August 1934, Box 55, Loren Miller Papers, Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif. (abbrev. Loren Miller Papers).

domed, mocha-colored Perry, who often sported spectacles, fought back, leading a successful boycott fight against "Smith's Market and the Kress Company" during the height of the Depression Decade of the 1930s.

Yet anticipating the Che/Lumumba club of the CP in L.A. during the 1960s, early on this party included "Italian, German, Polish...Greek [and] Slavonian" branches;⁶⁹ and earlier there were five "language groups," Lettish, Jewish (Yiddish), Russian, Hungarian and English. During the 1919-1921 era, most of its 70 members were concentrated in Boyle Heights, today the site of a mostly Chicano community. Just as there was fierce internal debate in the L.A. party during the 1960s—that ultimately caused then leader, Dorothy Ray Healey, to depart the ranks—there were like splits in the earliest stages. Throughout the 1920s, as the "Red Squad" surged, there was rancorous debate centered around the "Lovestonites"—followers of future Central Intelligence Agency operative, Jay Lovestone. There was likely a connection between the ravages of the Red Squad and the uproar ignited by Lovestone in that his presence was destabilizing and facilitated all manner of opportunistic infections. But he was purged in 1929 and, unsurprisingly, a burst of activism ensued, especially focusing on the issue of advancing Negro rights, wherein the cornerstone was laid for the defense of the Scottsboro Nine,⁷⁰ a true turning point in the struggle against Jim Crow.⁷¹ Even then, Cyril Briggs, still active in the CP in the 1960s, was secretary of the Negro Commission as of the 1920s and contributing mightily.⁷²

As the "language groups" within the CP suggested, the party was heavily comprised of Jewish-Americans—though Scottsboro was to change this too. Sparking its unacknowledged role as the vanguard, it was in L.A.—according to one scholar—that "the first American Jewish defense group [was] established in the 1930s specifically to combat insurgent Nazism in the [USA]." Just as the gradual influx of Negroes pre-1966 into California helps to explicate why the BPP

69. Report, 4 September 1935, Box 1, San Francisco Employer Surveillance Reports on the Communist Party, San Francisco State University Press (abbrev. San Francisco Employer Surveillance).

70. "Two Decades of Progress...Communist Party L.A. County, 1919-1939," Box 1327, Record Group 21, Records of the District Court for the Southern District of California, Central Division...USA v. Schneiderman, et al., NARA-Riverside (abbrev. USA v. Schneiderman, NARA-Riverside). Cf. Ted Morgan, *A Covert Life: Jay Lovestone, Communist, Anticommunist and Spymaster*, New York: Random House, 1999.

71. Home, *Powell v. Alabama*. According to longtime Communist Peggy Dennis, the Lovestone forces were strong along the Pacific Coast, being in "firm control" in Seattle—whose patterns often mirrored those in Los Angeles—by the 1920s. See her *The Autobiography of an American Communist: A Personal View of a Political Life, 1925-1975*, Westport, Conn.: Lawrence Hill, 1977, 32. On this fractiousness, see also Memorandum, 2 August 1927, Reel 87, Records of the CPUSA, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (abbrev. Records of the CPUSA-LC): Party "opposition has issued a four page statement against the local party leadership and distributed this widely...issued by Bush, Spector, Schneiderman...lies."

72. Report by Cyril Briggs, 3 January 1929, Reel 130, Files 1684-1699, Records of the CPUSA-LC. Adjacent see Statement by Briggs and Harry Hall on "White Chauvinism," ca. 1929.

arose on this soil. As their presence was accompanied by strains of various sorts, as police terror indicated, it is easy to detect a similar demographic trend, making plain why a “defense group” was necessary. In 1912, for example, the L.A. Jewish community was about 10,000, but it rose to 70,000 by 1930—and 137,000 by 1945.⁷³ This demographic shift did not elude the hawk-like attention of the LAPD, for by September 1935 their agent was present at the “Modern Humanist Church” at 842 South Main Street, where 485 had gathered: “all nationalities were present, about 60 percent being of the appearance of all Jews,”⁷⁴ though unrevealed was how this granular conclusion was reached.

Like Lovestone, the leader of the Red Squad, William Hynes, also forged a dalliance with the radical left at one point—before being expelled as a stoolpigeon, an indignity that seemed to inflame him further.⁷⁵ By 1927 there were a reported 300 Reds in Los Angeles County but, shockingly, it was quite common for comrades to arrive home in the wee hours of the morning after a mangling engagement with jackbooted officers of the law, leaving them drenched in blood, nursing broken bones. At times, it was said, comrades did not return at all—presumably winding up in the morgue.

Still, a hinge moment arrived in 1930 when the party and allies in the Trade Union Unity League stunned their formidable opponents when they amassed 40,000 at City Hall in protest of declining living standards delivered by an incipient Depression.⁷⁶ This mass mobilization was reflected most dramatically northward during the epochal 1934 General Strike in San Francisco, led by the stevedore—well-born in Melbourne—Harry Bridges, known to be quite close to the CP.⁷⁷ The emergent International Warehouse and Longshore Union, headquartered in “Baghdad by the Bay,” was to have a catalyzing impact on radicalism in California, including in the Southland, where the Long Beach-Los Angeles port was to flower as a major entry point for imports. But the union’s reach also extended east, for during the General Strike more than 20,000 East Bay workers peremptorily walked off their jobs, halting the area’s streetcar system and shuttering factories, restaurants and shops; inevitably, the police unleashed bloody violence in response.⁷⁸ As late as 1983, Bridges conspicuously continued to hail the role of Communists during the pathbreaking General Strike in the context of

73. Laura B. Rosenzweig, *Hollywood Spies: The Undercover Surveillance of Nazis in Los Angeles*, New York: New York University Press, 2017, 1, 224.

74. Report, 23 September 1935, Box 8, Norman Leonard Papers, San Francisco State University, Labor Archives and Research Center (abbrev. Norman Leonard Papers).

75. Schneiderman, *Dissent on Trial*, 88.

76. Box 1327, USA v. Schneiderman, NARA-Riverside.

77. Vernon L. Pedersen, *The Communist Party on the American Waterfront: Revolution, Reform and the Quest for Power*, Lanham: Lexington, 2020. Cf. Home, *Fighting in Paradise*.

78. Ali Winston and Darwin BondGraham, *The Riders Come Out at Night: Brutality, Corruption and Cover-up in Oakland*, New York: Atria, 2023, 105.

highlighting the role of the chief defendant in the 1951-52 Smith Act trial in Los Angeles, William Schneiderman, who returned the compliment.⁷⁹

For even as the effects of the General Strike were still being felt, the bosses in San Francisco were fretting, since the "real Communist organization" in San Pedro, L.A. County, was extensive, their "rank and file" membership perceptibly an "even stronger radical group than the members" on their own waterfront.⁸⁰

As with the BPP later, the LAPD did not retreat in the face of opposition advance. They refused adamantly to allow the CP-affiliated "Friends of the Soviet Union" to meet peaceably.⁸¹ Ida Rothstein, who was subsequently to die tragically in a still unsolved hit-and-run car accident, brought suit against Hynes in 1932 for various transgressions.⁸² Hynes was not an isolated figure within the ranks. Nathan Baker was both a Klan leader in the 1920s and a Deputy Sheriff in L.A. County. Louis Oaks, who ran the LAPD in the early 1920s, was also a card-carrying Klansman who winked at the recruitment of those he supervised into this terrorist body.⁸³ Unsurprisingly, Abraham Lincoln Wirin, who was to serve as an attorney during the determinative 1951 Smith Act trial, returned from a gathering of the American Civil Liberties Union in Manhattan bringing the conclusion that in California "denials of civil liberties are more frequent than in any other state"—a direct result of the depth of radicalism then ascending.⁸⁴

This was not the only malodorous cross-fertilization that afflicted progressive forces across the board. It was Hynes who in 1935, in a "confidential" missive, advised that Harry Pierce "in charge of intelligence work for the United States Army" and posted in the region would be issued a putatively illegal "Detective Lieutenant's badge."⁸⁵ The Westwood campus of the University of California, inaugurated only in the previous decade, became an early target: A right-wing "front" group was spawned—the "UCLA Americans"—"formed for the purpose of combating Communist propaganda." They knew that the Young Communist League was holding meetings at 938 Figueroa: "if you are interested we can inform you weekly of radical meetings in Los Angeles" was the helpful message to the LAPD.⁸⁶ The YCL had a toehold in Westwood and the LAPD was watching as their militants were peddling what were called peace pamphlets on campus.⁸⁷

79. Foreword by Harry Bridges in Schneiderman, *Dissent on Trial*, 8, 59.

80. Report, 11 October 1934, Box 1, 2009/068, San Francisco Employer Surveillance.

81. Testimony, 17 April 1952, Box 1341, USA v. Schneiderman, NARA-Riverside.

82. Testimony, 17 April 1952, USA v. Schneiderman, NARA-Riverside; and *Los Angeles Daily Journal*, 21 September 1933. On Rothstein, see Home, *Communist Front?*, 3-4.

83. Winston and BondGraham, *The Riders*, 105.

84. Special Report, Number 3, 11 January 1935, Box 1, 2009/068, San Francisco Employer Surveillance.

85. Captain Hynes to R.E. Steckel, 15 June 1935, Box 5, Norman Leonard Papers.

86. John McElheney to Chief Davis, 29 April 1935, Box 5, Norman Leonard Papers.

87. Report, 13 April 1935, Box 8, Norman Leonard Papers.

Officialdom also fretted that Reds were making gains among women: "Communists active among women voters," it was said dourly in mid-1935, referring sourly to the League of Women Voters.⁸⁸

It was on 2 January 1935 that the LAPD conveyed the "confidential" message that the YCL had recruited 200 members during the preceding year in L.A., and 17 in San Diego.⁸⁹ Not boding well for Japanese-Americans in L.A. was the 1935 message from Hynes that this community and Moscow were equivalent to "blood brothers."⁹⁰

Shortly thereafter, Toshio Sasaki, Vice Consul of Japan, sited at 1151 S. Broadway, urged Hynes to relinquish names of those "Japanese and Americans of Japanese parentage who are suspected of...Communitic and trade union [activities]."⁹¹ Presumably, these names were turned over, thus ultimately jeopardizing Washington's ability to confront Tokyo after 7 December 1941. A similar trend was evidenced when, again in a "confidential" report, the LAPD transmitted the intelligence that "Friends of Ethiopia"—then campaigning against fascist Italy's depredations in Africa—was "very weak."⁹²

However, befitting a party that was inspired into existence by an external event—the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917—a hallmark of the CP was a militant internationalism, leading numerous Negroes to the inference that this was the key to advance. The success of the Scottsboro case was validated precisely because there was a global network of Marxists more than willing to demonstrate at U.S. legations and facilities worldwide. The coordinator of this vast effort—William L. Patterson⁹³—was the connective tissue, still present to counsel the BPP in the 1960s and carry forward this fundamental precept.

But in the 1930s, it was not just Patterson who was the connective tissue between the CP and the Black Liberation movement, for in the Southland that role was played by Loren Miller, who eventually became a top litigator for the NAACP, equivalent to Thurgood Marshall in Manhattan. It was the latter who said that the case Miller argued in 1948—*Shelley v. Kraemer*, a mighty blow against housing segregation—was "unquestionably one of the most important in the whole field of civil rights." A few years later, Miller, an expert legal draftsman, was a principal architect of the briefs in the determinative *Brown v. Board of Education* case, which sounded the tocsin for *de jure* Jim Crow. Almost two decades later, the celebrated chanteuse Lena Horne spoke at his funeral, embossing his importance. But before those halcyon days, Miller toiled alongside the foremost Black Communist, Cyril Briggs, on the CP-sponsored "Crusader

88. Report, 20 July 1935, Box 1, San Francisco Employer Surveillance.

89. Memorandum, 2 January 1935, Box 8, Norman Leonard Papers.

90. Memorandum, 25 May 1935, Box 8, Norman Leonard Papers.

91. Toshio Sasaki, 9 March 1937, Box 8, Norman Leonard Papers.

92. Report, 4 September 1935, Box 8, Norman Leonard Papers.

93. Horne, *Black Revolutionary*.

News Agency," and in 1932 alongside the Harlem Bard Langston Hughes and Patterson's eventual spouse Louise Thompson, traveled to the Soviet Union in order to make a big-budget movie excoriating U.S. racism,⁹⁴ an auspicious departure for a man who became renowned in anticommunist circles of the liberal NAACP as the Red Scare dawned.

As early as 1933 Miller was en route to the Second Baptist Church in Monrovia—the L.A. county suburb and future site of countless television and commercial shootings—to discuss "your trip to Russia and your conception of Communism."⁹⁵ Then Miller informed "Comrade Patterson" that he was very busy talking for various working class organizations "since my return" from this profound journey, signing off, naturally, "comradely yours."⁹⁶

Revels Cayton—scion of an illustrious Negro family and carrying the forename of a U.S. Senator from Reconstruction Mississippi—also was within the CP orbit, as his leadership of the Patterson-directed International Labor Defense indicated: He welcomed Miller to Seattle in order to share insights.⁹⁷ It was also in 1933 that Miller informed Cayton that "constant and vigorous attacks on the NAACP will do much to root out its rapidly vanishing influence,"⁹⁸ a view that he pranced away from in the late 1940s. For in 1933 Miller wrote the soon-to-be heretical praiseworthy words that the Soviet Union was "eliminating centuries old racial, sectional and national problems within its borders"—obviously of moment for Negroes. By early 1934, Ben Davis, Jr., yet another scion—his father was a leading Atlanta Republican and close to the family of fellow Negro, Dr. King⁹⁹—was a budding Red leader and worked alongside Langston Hughes in the Harlem-based League of Struggle for Negro Rights. Miller too was to soar as a journalist in the Southland; it was then that Davis told him that "your column is one of the most popular features of the paper" of the LSNR, the *Negro Liberator*.¹⁰⁰ By then Miller was on the masthead as "Contributing Editor" with Davis egging him on, confiding that his "column is excellent" as he wanted to promote him as "co-editor," which "will add prestige" to the journal.¹⁰¹ By 1935 Miller was listed as Assistant Editor of the Crusader News Agency of Harlem, just below Davis's name.¹⁰² It was then that the Angeleno began to "ghost" his comrade: "Are you

94. Amina Hassan, *Loren Miller: Civil Rights Attorney and Journalist*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015, 3, 6, 7, 109, 4.

95. G.W. Reed to Loren Miller, 18 February 1933, Box 3, Loren Miller Papers.

96. Loren Miller from 207 East 45th Street, Los Angeles, to "Comrade Patterson," 3 March 1933, Box 3, Loren Miller Papers.

97. Revels Cayton to Loren Miller, n.d., Box 3, Loren Miller Papers.

98. Loren Miller to Revels Cayton, 3 March 1933, Box 3, Loren Miller Papers.

99. Gerald Home, *Black Liberation/Red Scare: Ben Davis and the Communist Party*, Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1994.

100. Ben Davis, Jr. to Loren Miller, 3 January 1934, Box 3, Loren Miller Papers.

101. Ben Davis to Loren Miller, 4 November 1934, Box 3, Loren Miller Papers.

102. Letter on CNA stationery, 18 March 1935, Box 3, Loren Miller Papers.

sick, dead [or] what," Davis queried, adding jocularly that "if you don't hurry your stuff, I won't recommend you for membership on the staff of the American Pravda after the revolution."¹⁰³ Davis continued beseechingly, reminding Miller of the "big hole it leaves in the *Crusader News* when your article does not appear."¹⁰⁴

The advent of the Communists marked a new departure in the centuries-long Black Liberation Movement, as the Reds sought to shift the discourse to class and class struggle, with Negroes being the epitome of the latter given their initial status as unpaid workers. They stood to benefit, and did so, as the Scottsboro case marked the beginning of the end for formal—*de jure*—Jim Crow. Walter Stack, Communist spouse of a Smith Act defendant, also a business agent of the Marine Firemen's Union, ignited a firestorm of protest when he facilitated the admission of the first Negro into this otherwise Jim Crow union. The FBI, said Schneiderman, "paid us an inadvertent compliment; anyone fighting for Negro rights was a Communist." Then there was the *coup de grâce* when Reds were isolated in the 1950s, as baby steps toward desegregation were attempted—leaving Negroes disadvantaged for upcoming *class* battles. Nevertheless, this persecuted minority began to attain prominence in waterfront unions, including the National Maritime Union, where yet another Communist—Jamaica-born Ferdinand Smith—served as second-in-command. His ouster from these shores—again—compromised the ability of Black Americans to battle on the *class* front.¹⁰⁵

Still, the Golden State had a special twist on this matter. Loren Miller, who migrated from the orbit of the CP to the highest councils of the NAACP, recalled that the Red Squad in L.A. had as an "ostensible target...the Communists" and, contrary to Perry above, they "had little to do...with Negroes, except when [they] felt that...Communists were trying to propagandize Negroes. Then they might swoop down on a meeting. But [they] pretty well kept [their] hands off of Negro gatherings, as such," which flummoxed inter-racialism, seen as the province of the CP.¹⁰⁶

The much maligned Communist International dispatched cadre worldwide to execute various tasks—Patterson, for example, was in and out of a dangerous Hamburg during the thunderous 1930s—allowing them to instigate global solidarity on behalf of African Americans. As foreshadowed, Eugene Dennis, who was to lead the CPUSA in the 1950s when it was subjected to hammer blows, was

103. Ben Davis to Loren Miller, 1 February 1935, Box 3, Loren Miller Papers.

104. Ben Davis to Loren Miller, 25 March 1935, Box 3, Loren Miller Papers.

105. Home, *Red Seas*, 2005.

106. Loren Miller, Oral History, 29 April 1967, CSU-Fullerton (abbrev. Loren Miller, Oral History).

the CI delegate in South Africa in the early 1930s, able to glean transnational lessons about the toxicity of white supremacy.¹⁰⁷

A steady stream of U.S. Communists flocked to Moscow during the 1930s, including the prime defendant in the 1951-52 Smith Act trial in L.A., William Schneiderman. As with a disproportionate number of party members then, he too was Jewish. He was present at the pivotal Communist International gathering of 1935 which ratified the line already in motion in a number of sites, what was called the "Popular Front," i.e., Reds in league with wider and broader forces as they sought to pin fascism to the floor.¹⁰⁸

Samuel Darcy, yet another top Red leader in the Golden State, also happened to be of Jewish ancestry, and by the time Schneiderman was decamping in Moscow, Darcy was on trial back home. He purportedly had registered to vote in 1934 claiming birth in New York—but, actually, it was said, he was born as Samuel Dardeck in Ukraine.¹⁰⁹ (He was controversial: His comrade Dorothy Healey termed him "brilliant" but "obnoxious.")¹¹⁰ Recall that it was Darcy who advised that Reds should consider going the para-military route in light of the rise of fascist gangs. His comrade Archie Brown made a national tour "speaking to as many groups as he could," said their mutual comrade Ben Dobbs of Los Angeles, that is, to "YCL or Communist groups," encouraging them to pursue "raising money to buy uniforms and projecting this idea of parading," or forming a "quasi-military organization," which Dobbs opposed adamantly.¹¹¹

This was occurring in the midst of the instrumental gubernatorial race in the Golden State featuring the dissident writer Upton Sinclair, who was subjected to a barrage of frightful propaganda;¹¹² his opponents opined that although Darcy was running against him, these purported Reds were hoping for the triumph of the man from Pasadena.¹¹³ (Subsequently, Frank Jordan, California's Deputy Secretary of State, told the House Un-American Activities as if it were self-indicting, that 1934 marked the "first year that the Communist Party was on the ballot in this state."¹¹⁴)

Darcy's opponents, monitoring the race, believed that party leaders thought of the white-maned writer as a "windbag" in pursuit of a "pipe dream," but if he

107. Eugene Dennis to Executive Committee of the Communist International, 16 July 1932 in Sheridan Johns, et al., *South Africa and the Communist International, Vol. II: Bolshevik Footsoldiers...*, London: Cass, 2003, 28-31.

108. Schneiderman, Dissent on Trial, 11, 47.

109. *People v. Sam Darcy*, 1935, Box 8, Norman Leonard Papers.

110. Dorothy Healey, Oral History, 1972-1974, UCLA (abbrev. Dorothy Healey, Oral History).

111. Ben Dobbs, Oral History.

112. Greg Mitchell, *The Campaign of the Century: Upton Sinclair's Race for California Governor and the Birth of Media Politics*, New York: Random House, 1992.

113. Report, 11 October 1934, Box 1, 2009/068, San Francisco Employer Surveillance.

114. Frank Jordan to J.B. Matthews, HUAC, 10 May 1940, RG 233, Box 949, Communist Party Files, Part IV, Records of House Committee on Un-American Activities, NARA-Washington, D.C. (abbrev. HUAC Records).

won, since he had no organization behind him, his "End Poverty in California" (EPIC) crusade, would be forced to "turn" to the CP for aid and, it was predicted, he would then "get the 100 percent support from the 65,000 Communists in the state"—especially since he had pledged to free Tom Mooney, the political prisoner thought to have been involved in a 1916 bombing in San Francisco.¹¹⁵

Sinclair's 1934 race was reflective of how disruptive a serious third-party challenge to the status quo can be, just one more reason for the decisive Smith Act trial of 1951-52. The controversial writer charged that the disruption was embodied in the harried reaction of the soon-to-be political leader of Black L.A., future Congressman Augustus Hawkins, like Dr. Hudson, quite melanin deficient. Sinclair claimed Hawkins initially backed EPIC, then retreated due to arm-twisting by corrupt Negro preachers.¹¹⁶

Sinclair aside, officialdom thought they had reason to surveil those who either endorsed or did not oppose a verdant branch of armed struggle. The Mooney episode was viewed as being consistent with that of 1910 at the *Los Angeles Times*, which just happened to derail Job Harriman's socialist candidacy for the mayoralty. He seemed to be sailing to City Hall, having won more votes than others, an apparent shoo-in. Ortie McManigal, fingered then for the bombing, supposedly was a Johnny Appleseed of conflagration, supposedly single-handedly being responsible for 150 explosions—a protean record that reportedly still stands to this very day. This was happening as the City of Angels was growing spectacularly, by some measures at a faster rate than any city ever. The man he faced across the class barricade, Harrison Gray Otis, had arrived in the Southland by 1875 at the age of 38. The man often referred to as General Otis, given his service during the Civil War, assumed command of antiunion forces—certainly in California, if not nationally—thereby enhancing the importance of his left-wing opposition.¹¹⁷

This was all notably worrying to officialdom since the alleged "65,000" in San Francisco represented the "largest number of radicals in the country."¹¹⁸ (Across the bay in Alameda, the City Manager in 1936 was said to have "over 80,000 names on file of Communists and Communist sympathizers."¹¹⁹ Yet two years earlier there were thought to be about 70 comrades in San Diego—respectable, to be sure, but it is hard to conjure that multiple orders of magnitude of radicalism separated the two conflicted regions.)¹²⁰

115. Report, 19 October 1934, Box 1, 2009/068, San Francisco Employer Surveillance.

116. Hassan, *Loren Miller*, 108.

117. Irwin, *Deadly Times*, 10, 27, 45, 48, 55.

118. "Special Report No. 2," 4 January 1935, Box 1, 2009/068, San Francisco Employer Surveillance.

119. William Hynes to B. Ray Fritz, 7 April 1936, Box 5, Norman Leonard Papers.

120. List, 7 September 1934, Box 2, Harper Knowles Papers, San Francisco State University (abbrev. Harper Knowles Papers). See also Proceedings of 1938 Convention of California Communist Party, Box 1, Jerry Voorhis Papers, Claremont Colleges Library (abbrev. Jerry Voorhis Papers): The party set a goal of 10,000 members by 1939.

Actually, these larger numbers may have been a tad yeasty but, as the lawyers might say, it was indicative of the state of mind of those propounding, as they imagined the potency of the foe they were facing. But what is real is the idea that the existing order in the 1930s was under challenge. The number of registered members of the Republican Party was declining, for example.¹²¹

The crackdown on Darcy was an aspect of a wider dragnet targeting the CP, presumably not worthy of the constitutional protection of freedom of association. The speaking tour of CP candidates for office, Pettis Perry and Archie Brown, were scrutinized carefully.¹²² A breakthrough occurred when, unusually, Perry—a Negro—was nominated by the CP as Lieutenant Governor on their ticket.¹²³

Born in Marion, Alabama, in 1897, Perry was an exemplar of the organic intellectual, which the CP helped to bring forward. He had labored as a farmer, a section hand, factory worker and hobo. In the latter capacity he had survived what a journalist called the “hobo jungles”—a signpost of a now forgotten era—as he journeyed as far as El Paso and Alaska before alighting in the Southland in 1921, though he was on the road circuitously from 1917-1932. His voice was described as “soft” but not his ideological rigor,¹²⁴ as the CP began to ascend congruent with his joining their ranks in 1932. In 1934 he received a respectable 11,000 votes in his race for Lieutenant Governor.¹²⁵ But soon a nosedive for his party was to be engineered.

121. Bernstein, “Building Bridges,” 60.

122. Report, 28 September 1934, Box 1, 2009/068, San Francisco Employer Surveillance. Brown, like Darcy, Schneiderman and other leading California Communists, happened to be of Jewish ancestry. See Box 1, Archie Brown Papers, San Francisco State University.

123. Clipping, 26 October 1934, Box 55, Loren Miller Papers.

124. Richard O. Boyer, “Pettis Perry; the Story of a Working Class Leader,” April 1952, Box 68b, Dorothy Healey Papers, CSU Long Beach.

125. Pettis Perry, “The Negro’s Stake in the War,” ca. 1943, Box 69b, Dorothy Healey Papers, CSU Long Beach.

Chapter 2

Red Advance Fuels Black Liberation, 1935-World War II

As the 1930s unwound, ever brighter horizons seemed to be unfolding for both the NAACP and the CP. Advances on the class front, symbolized by the meteoric ascension of waterfront workers, then had positive knock-on effects for the Southland's signature industry: Hollywood. With advances in class struggle politics, Marcus Garvey's deportation notwithstanding, Black Nationalism was not necessarily disabled, although that was to come by 1945 as this force bet heavily on a wartime victory by Imperial Japan, which crashed in the ashes of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.¹ Presumably, the CP made a wise bet in wagering on the viability of the prevailing wartime alliance between Moscow and Washington but, as matters evolved, the Red Scare destabilized this prospect, leaving the NAACP to stand relatively unchallenged—at least until the rise of the BPP by the 1960s.

* * *

Loren Miller is a useful vessel through which to view this ideological transition, given his budding stardom within the CP orbit and the eventual embrace of him by the growingly anticommunist NAACP. By the Summer of 1935 this metamorphosis was well in motion, though the Angeleno still immodestly cited the words of noted journalist George Streator, who termed him accurately as being "by far the most competent observer the CP ever attracted to its fold." In that context, Miller added brightly, "I turned out to be quite a personage in St. Louis."² Apparently, his Communist ties did not deter Roy Wilkins, Number 2 in the NAACP hierarchy, for as Miller pointed out, by October, he "dropped in to see me last night and we talked of cabbages and kings and the Middle West," though he boldly lamented the departure of Du Bois from the

1. Home, *Facing the Rising Sun*, passim.

2. Loren Miller to Juanita Miller, 12 July 1935, Box 3, Loren Miller Papers.

organization's councils, another sign of ideological ferment. For the publication the balding, diminutive intellectual once edited—*The Crisis*—was now seen by Miller as “an uninspired and uninspiring rag,”³ though he did not recommend vocally that it mimic the *Negro Liberator*.

The latter notwithstanding, though Miller had deserted the *Liberator*, he had not abandoned all former commitments. Or, at least that was the implication of his being in touch as late as 1938 with John Pittman, a Black Communist journalist, an Atlantan like Ben Davis, an alumnus of Morehouse College like Dr. King, and a University of California alumnus, like William Patterson. Addressing him intimately as “Dear Loren,” Pittman (1906-1993) had the temerity to ask cheekily, “how’s the up and coming People’s Commissar of Justice of the future Soviet America?”⁴

Responding speedily from 1105 East Vernon Avenue in Los Angeles, Miller stiffly provided a rationale for the rupture in contact with the comrades, noting that “[I] have been ordered to either take complete rest of work [or] half day and drop all outside activity.”⁵ Or the stiffness may have been motivated by knowledge of what LAPD operatives suspected: “This fellow John Pittman...is not what he represents himself to be...we believe he is a Soviet government undercover spy.”⁶

Miller, who had roots in the Midwest, was the son of an enslaved man, though he was that rarity, a graduate of law school, Washburn in Topeka in his case. Upon arrival in L.A., he associated with Charlotta Bass and her *California Eagle*, then the leading Black newspaper of the city, if not the Far West. There he honed his journalistic skills developed at the Crusader News Agency. Born in 1874, Bass arrived in the Southland by 1910 and rapidly established a merited reputation as a crusader for equality, worthy of Miller’s attention. Tellingly, as he moved away from the CP, she was to move toward it, even during the difficult days of the 1950s. She was a “cagey politician,” thought Miller, and her spouse, John Bass, was a man with “profound integrity.” She? Not so much. He thought she was unduly influenced by her radical nephew, who like an earlier version of Miller—and an earlier generation—was quite taken with Moscow and the prospect of shifting U.S. society from the inveterate marker that was “race” toward the more comfortable axis that was class. The nephew, John Kinloch, was “probably” a Communist, said Miller just before passing away in 1967, and was “favorably impressed” with Moscow, thinking like Lincoln Steffens that he had seen the future there. As a result, Miller added sniffingly, “she lacked the saving grace of...cynicism.”

But even then when Miller was a confirmed member of the Negro elite, he confessed to his own “rapid enchantment” with the CP beginning in the 1930s.

3. Loren Miller to Juanita Miller, 8 October 1935, Box 3, Loren Miller Papers.

4. John Pittman to Loren Miller, 2 March 1938, Box 3, Loren Miller Papers.

5. Loren Miller to John Pittman, 5 March 1938, Box 3, Loren Miller Papers.

6. Report, 26 February 1940, Box 1, Harper Knowles Papers.

Scottsboro had "quite an influence on me," indeed, he stressed, had "*profound effect* [on] *all Negroes*," which was all too true. The astute attorney, then a judge, did not flinch in acknowledging that the cases flowing from this injustice in Alabama established "really a landmark in American law." This contributed to the popularity of the Communist-influenced National Negro Congress, born in the 1930s, whose L.A. chapter engaged in "quite a good deal of activity." Yet he did not connect his growing friendliness with the anticommunist labor leader, A. Philip Randolph: Like the latter, he agreed that the Berlin-Moscow Non-Aggression Pact of 1939 led to "disillusion [by] many Negroes," including himself.

Yet as the growth of the NNC in the Southland suggested, there were peculiarities in Miller's new hometown. "Census figures," he agreed, "suggest that Los Angeles had one of the lowest unemployment rates among Negroes in the early 1930s, yet one of the highest of any city in the country by 1940." For, he continued, "the Depression had struck in the industrial process first. The Negroes were not in industry in Los Angeles in any substantial numbers in 1930. Consequently, the first impact of the Depression did not dislodge them. They were employees of the middle class and the domestic trades, and things of that kind. So," he said, "the middle class for a while wasn't struck by the Depression. There came a time when the Depression hit it in full force. And when it hit full force, of course, then Negroes felt it very severely," and like metal filings to a magnet, they grasped at radical remedies. Even as the then Boulder Dam was built in nearby Nevada, meaning a plethora of construction jobs, Negroes were "almost entirely excluded," and the then tiny town that was Las Vegas "wasn't quite the gambling capital" that it became. Thus, "discrimination" there was "very high. I remember a friend of mine and I were warned against walking through the...white redlight section. It seemed that even that was contrary to the mores of Las Vegas at that time." Besides, "Negroes were not employed" generally, meaning having little cash to expend in any case. And, he concurred, the "border patrol" focused intently on barring Negroes from the Far West in any event. This was "constantly being said," he said, a "thousand times" at least. For "intelligent and discerning" Negroes like himself knew that "if you devised measures against keeping the poor out you were really devising measures to keep Negroes out." Yet those unlike Miller, meaning longtime Black Angelenos, were often displeased by the influx of Negroes. "They resented them," he recalled, given the propagandistic cry that "California could take care of its own, but that it couldn't take care of persons from out of state. And the newspapers said this all the time with no particular reference to race. But Negroes picked it up and said, 'Well, if these Negroes would stay away, those of us who live here would be better off and we could take care of ourselves.'" Moreover, they argued, "these people who are coming here don't know how to act and how to behave, and they are making it hard for the rest of us." This led to Jim Crow schools, notably in the Imperial Valley to the southeast,

toward Arizona. "It's the only area in California that I know where separate schools were maintained in open and direct and unashamed violation of the California law. Otherwise...separate schools grew up simply by locating them in the midst of Negro settlements, things of that kind [e.g., near El Centro] ends post 1954," with the *Brown v. Board of Education* case that he helped to engineer in the high court.

Miller was hesitant about the defining Sinclair gubernatorial campaign of 1934. "I had reservations about Upton Sinclair himself because Sinclair was a Southerner," a Scarlett Letter in sum. "And the truth of the matter is Upton Sinclair then and Upton Sinclair now had never quite gotten over being a Southerner. His wife was the daughter of Senator John Sharp Williams of Mississippi," akin to a legislative Klansman. Thus, "during his campaign...he had some kind of a separate but equal...doctrine, as far as Negroes in California were concerned. I'm sure he would have denied that but his political expressions indicated that's really what he looked forward to," consistent with the then broad strokes of liberalism. Yet "Negroes were ready to leave the...Republican Party and go to the Democratic Party," a trend that had accelerated in 1932. "And that process was hastened" by Sinclair, weaknesses aside, since "nobody had a greater stake in ending poverty," his calling card, "than the Negroes who lived here. "So," as was their wont, "they deserted the Republican government nominee [Frank] Merriam to vote for...Sinclair." Meanwhile "a group of young persons...had grown up [that] had begun to take over leadership of the Democratic Party by default because there was no such—there was no old leadership for them to displace."

The Negro passion for ending poverty also sheds light on the attraction of the CP, for these radicals—said the comrade of Thurgood Marshall—"were not...hated in the Negro community as they were in the white community." Hence, they "could circulate freely in the Negro community without any difficulty," which he knew more than most.

It was Jim Crow that was the bugaboo of Negroes, and the CP pledge to dismantle it resonated with them. "Separate days" for Negroes in Pasadena to use public recreation facilities was a pet peeve. The "day before they were going to let the water out of the pool they let Negroes in it" since this minority's presence, "I suppose...dirtied it beyond all hope of redemption. Because always the next day they let the water out and then the white folks would use the park. And by the time it got dirty again, the Negroes would come back. Negroes won that lawsuit." But then the New Deal, presumptive friend of the Negro, inaugurated the Federal Housing Administration in 1934. "And FHA," Miller said, "was not only a proponent of racial restrictive covenants but FHA furnished a model covenant for home builders so that [they] would be sure to restrict their homes against Negro occupancy. Well, this of course, heightened the feeling among Negroes that the Constitution sanctioned their exclusion." Finally, in 1948, as Cold War pressures

to desegregate pinched, there came Miller's signature case, *Shelley v. Kraemer*, where, as he recounted, courts decided that they "could not lend their process for the enforcement of racial restrictive covenants." Undeterred and indicative of the mossback reaction then obtaining, "the Los Angeles Realty Board and the California Real Estate Association proposed to amend the Constitution in order to give courts that right...they were serious about it."⁷

Gradually, but perceptibly, Miller moved toward the welcoming embrace of the NAACP; objectively, given the strength of the right-wing in a settler society,⁸ it did not require a crystal ball to predict that at some point Communists tied to Moscow would be due for a comeuppance. But his shift was hardly sudden. In early 1939, when there was a NNC-sponsored "State Conference of Negro Organizations [and] their Friends," unfolding in L.A. at 1158 East 12th Street, Miller was listed as leader of the NCC, known to be close to the CP. This "Popular Front" also roped in A. Philip Randolph's comrade, C.L. Dellums, Hollywood screenwriter Guy Endore, Communist leader, Hursel Alexander, recently freed political prisoner Tom Mooney, and Negro entrepreneur Norman Houston.⁹ His protestations to the contrary, his niece—Jean Kerina—disputes the assertion by Miller that he never joined the CP.¹⁰ Whatever the case, Dorothy Healey pays him the ultimate compliment, arguing that "if anyone made the law" of antiracism in the U.S., it was Loren Miller.¹¹

In any event, there was much to do on the antiracist front, irrespective of the political guise. As early as 1931, Delilah Beasley, the pioneer chronicler of Black California who migrated to Oakland in 1910 at the age of 39, was complaining to the NAACP about the "hot bed" of the KKK in which she now found herself. She forwarded a news story about how a San Francisco "mob...of teamsters" was "balked" in their attempted "lynching" of a "Negro who was being dragged toward a telephone pole with a rope around his neck," as the aggressors "beat and kicked their captive," 28-year-old Hillyard Denton. Why? He was accused of purloining a "package of cheese" as hunger stalked the land.¹² Arguably, what

7. These lengthy excerpts can be found in Loren Miller, Oral History, 3 March and 29 April 1967. At the same site (CSU-Fullerton), see also Almena Lomax, Oral History, 27 December 1966 (abbrev. Almena Lomax, Oral History): She was born in Galveston—"when is my business" was her tart response. She graduated from Jordan High School, then attended Los Angeles Community College and the University of Southern California. She worked for Charlotta Bass in the 1930s for \$10 per week and recalled her astringently as "selfish and dominating," the "world's greatest jive artist." She worked alongside Ernestine Jones, who soared to a kind of stardom in her role as Sapphire on the once popular television show, *Amos 'n' Andy*.

8. On the strength of Neo-Nazi forces in the Southland in the 1930s, see Reports, Box 3, Jerry Voorhis Papers.

9. State Conference of Negro Organizations and Their Friends," 10-12 February 1939, Box 67A, Dorothy Healey Papers, CSU Long Beach.

10. Hassan, *Loren Miller*, 123.

11. Dorothy Healey, Oral History.

12. Delilah Beasley to William Pickens, 28 January 1931, Part I, Box C350, NAACP Papers-LC.

discomfited Beasley explains, as well, the accelerating shift away from the GOP—the party of Lincoln—which Miller had detected. An irate Walter White, NAACP leader, demanded the “impeachment” of Governor James Rolph, the Republican stalwart in Sacramento, for by that juncture he was preoccupied by the horror of a “double lynching” in San Jose.¹³ This campaign was sufficiently public that the oft consulted Negro weekly, the *Pittsburgh Courier*, carried a story about “Negro citizens” moving to impeach him.¹⁴

Rolph left office. But by 1935, Roy Wilkins of the Association was complaining to his successor, Gov. Frank Merriam—who vanquished Sinclair due to often hysterical backing from the state’s elite—about a mob near Eureka, in North Coastal Humboldt County, who were “hunting” a Negro, Robert Miller, “and has announced publicly that it intends lynching him immediately.”¹⁵

The Black San Franciscan Ray Thompson was paying close attention to this troubling skein of events. Born in the city by the bay in 1905 as a jolting earthquake shook local society, he learned that his father—a carpenter—was recruited to rebuilding the faltering metropolis but felt compelled to carry a pistol because of the venomous hostility he endured. Jobs for Negroes, he stressed in 1978, were then “very restricted, *very restricted*.” This was the case, although he emphasized the number of Negroes then was “very small, *very small*...less than a thousand probably.” Oppression meant “we just did not get enough to eat” as a child, so he turned to petty crime before rerouting to Booker T. Washington’s Tuskegee Institute, where he received a diploma in business by 1925. Yet as he arrived in town a young Negro teenager was being lynched, reminding him of what linked Alabama and the Bay Area. Sufficiently radicalized, he was “absolutely not” a Christian, but joined the CP in the late 1930s, became a seaman and visited Cape Town, then a growing node of antiracist resistance, and Shanghai too. Although his father was an NAACP leader by the 1920s, Thompson, had little respect for this group: “fear of being called Communist was an obsession with them,”¹⁶ he said, another way of saying that they were petrified by the idea of being accused of violating the post-1865 mandate circumscribing support of the massive expropriation of private property imbedded in the bodies of Africans.

Thompson was reflecting a bygone era when it appeared that the CP and its various affiliates were perceived as a legitimate challenger to what became liberal and NAACP hegemony. This too was reflected in the tussle over who would direct the defense of the Scottsboro defendants. By 1936 this “popular front” had an office at 900 Spring Street in downtown L.A. at the Arcade Building. The Executive Board included not only Pettis Perry, CP majordomo, but also Carey McWilliams, then in the infant stages of a storied career that would lead to his

13. Walter White to Leland Hawkins of San Francisco, 27 December 1933, NAACP Papers-LC.

14. *Pittsburgh Courier*, 9 December 1933.

15. Roy Wilkins to Governor Merriam, 5 August 1935, Part 1, Box C350, NAACP Papers-LC.

16. Ray Thompson, Oral History, 6 November 1978, SFPL.

being a major interpreter of the state, then leading *The Nation*, an influential periodical. But also included were NAACP delegates and premier litigator Hugh MacBeth.¹⁷

Indicative of the growth was the report that membership of the CP, which via Scottsboro was driving Black Liberation, was 4800 statewide as of 1 January 1938, but was 6000 by May. The "Honorary Presidium" at their 1938 convention included not just Josef Stalin but also Bulgarian Communist leader Georgi Dimitrov, national leaders Earl Browder and William Z. Foster, Tom Mooney, French Communist bigwig Maurice Thorez, and Mao Zedong. Matt Crawford, Negro leader from Berkeley was present—along with Pettis Perry.¹⁸

Consistent with what became the hallmark of progressive campaigns in the Entertainment Capital, an insider reported that a "group of Hollywood actors, writers, etc. have been giving a series of Scottsboro benefits."¹⁹ The humorist Robert Benchley, who collaborated fruitfully with the MGM film studio, headed Hollywood efforts on behalf of the pilloried Alabamans.²⁰ He was to be found frequently at the local office at 6912 Hollywood Boulevard, along with the Communist director-screenwriter Herbert Biberman, responsible for the 1950s classic standard-bearer of left, labor and Chicano cinema *Salt of the Earth*; and with Dalton Trumbo, a future contributor to the Panthers and Angela Davis's defense alike; fellow screenwriter Lester Cole; actor Lionel Stander, accused of smuggling Communist propaganda into movies under the nose of moguls; James Cagney, a celluloid tough guy who was also despised by the elite because of his working-class solidarity; the Negro actor Clarence Muse; and Boris Karloff, who starred in *Frankenstein* but whose alignment with Communists was seen as the real horror to fear by the bosses.²¹ (Muse also served as director of the "Colored Unit" of the Federal Theatre Project, funded by Washington; in that capacity, in 1938, he provided a "list of names capable of becoming directors,"²² yet this proved generally unavailing, akin to today.)

By 1939, a person-in-the-know had wandered to the office of the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League, where a dynamic duo presided—Ella Winter, a journalist, and Donald Ogden Stewart, a screenwriter whose credits included *The Philadelphia Story*. The stunned observer found that the "cream of the Motion Picture Colony, many notables," were there. "If one could read of the monthly 'donations' to the cause, one would think they are crazy." His dumbfounded estimate was that "five Motion Picture Stars...donate to the cause in excess of \$2000 per month."

17. Stationery of Scottsboro Defense Committee, March 1936, Part II, Box H6, NAACP Papers-LC.

18. Proceedings of California Communist Convention, 14-15 May 1938, Box 1, Jerry Voorhis Papers.

19. Carl Echols, Chair of Scottsboro Defense Committee to Morris Shapiro, New York City, 20 April 1936, Part II, H6, NAACP Papers-LC.

20. Morris Shapiro to Robert Benchley, 31 August 1937, Part II, Box H6, NAACP Papers-LC.

21. Stationery of "Hollywood Scottsboro Committee," ca. 1936-37, Part II, Box H6, NAACP Papers-LC.

22. Clarence Muse to Jerome Coray, 24 August 1938, Part I, Box D38, National Urban League Papers.

[emphasis-original] His bewildered observation was that "not less than 600 high ranking Motion Picture Stars, Directors, Scenario Writers, dramatists and even beauticians for studios are in" the League.²³

One has to be cautious in sifting through such intelligence reports since the right-wing may have been incentivized to inflate the dimensions of what they encountered in order to garner ever larger budgets. For example, after Ellis Patterson was elected Lieutenant Governor of the state in 1939, intelligence offhandedly commented that he had been a "party member for years...that's no news,"²⁴ though what may have been at play was conflating his New Deal orientation with the platform of the CP—in order to weaken both. For whatever reason, the authorities did not always distinguish between New Deal politicians elected with CP support—and the CP itself. Then there were the politicians elected with CP support early in their careers—for instance, the mayor at the time of the transformative Watts Uprising of 1965, Sam Yorty—then being accused of having "betrayed them." Not missing an opportunity for disruption, a police agent then warned that "severe measures" were "to be taken against him,"²⁵ as if he had to worry about an assassination attempt.

Not coincidentally, then, the ally of Hollywood moguls—the police—were then wringing their hands about "Communist attempts to organize [a] union among movie extras,"²⁶ as if this would sabotage the entire industry.

Reflective of the national impact of radicals gaining influence within the cash machine that was Hollywood, was the message from faraway Louisiana where the "Coalition of Patriotic Societies" worriedly informed the LAPD that "moving picture stars are regularly contributing to the Communist movement."²⁷

The fabled "Red Squad" of the LAPD was hardly quiescent in the face of this organizing. In 1936 a "confidential memorandum" was passed along from the department's "Intelligence Bureau" that purported to include a list of CP donors with actor James Cagney "being one of the main contributors," while a "Russian Jew who runs a drugstore in Glendale"—soon-to-be a magnet attracting migrating Armenians—"is one of the main 'brains' for [the CP]."²⁸

Setting aside the alleged veracity of the above, it remains true that this rapidly growing region was attracting dissidents—often left-wing—from around the

23. Report, 23 December 1939, Box 1, Harper Knowles Papers.

24. Report, 1 April 1940, Box 1, Harper Knowles Papers.

25. Report, 3 March 1940, Box 1, Harper Knowles Papers. According to CP leader Dorothy Healey, Yorty—and fellow right-winger Jack Tenney, who also became a major persecutor of the party—were once quite close to the comrades, but the future mayor was alienated when they did not back his bids for higher office. Earlier, he had been one of the first among the broader left who backed Spanish Republicans during their time of trial in the 1930s. Dorothy Healey, Oral History.

26. Memorandum, 20 February 1933, Box 5, Norman Leonard Papers.

27. Lawrence Stone, secretary of Louisiana Coalition of Patriotic Societies to LAPD, 15 August 1938. Box 8, Norman Leonard Papers.

28. "Confidential Memorandum," 24 October 1936, Box 5, Norman Leonard Papers.

globe, including the southern neighbor. Thus, it was also in 1936 that officialdom in L.A. was told that the Mexican Consul there was “continually engaged in urging his countrymen to join the Federation of Mexican Agricultural Workers Union...American citizens as well,” indicating the impact of having a neighbor with unresolved grievances against the U.S.²⁹

Meanwhile, by May 1937 the proliferating Hollywood section of the CP was meeting at 5525 Harold Way, not far distant from today’s Netflix; almost 80 comrades were present as Emil Freed presided. With Russian roots, he had joined the CP in 1929, ran for Congress in 1940 and then participated mightily in the defining Hollywood strike of 1945. But then in his 75-minute peroration he lamented that “one of the greatest mistakes” of the CP in Moscow was “permitting the exile or even the escape of [Leon] Trotsky”—he should have been, according to the police agent transcribing his remarks, “properly liquidated.”³⁰

Setting aside the accuracy of the transcription, despite the stereotype of Communist automatons and robots marching to the diktat of the Supreme Leader in Moscow, the reality was rampant raucousness—at least in L.A. Earlier there was a general membership meeting held downtown that was described as “disorderly.” It stretched inordinately from 9:30 a.m. to 7 p.m., though it was not clear that all 87 present stayed until the end. It was the “craziest meeting,” said the transcriber, with “bickering, quarreling, name calling.” Yet, amidst the frenzy, careful note was taken of the presence of William F. Nelson, a “Negro” and “literature agent” responsible for circulating propaganda.³¹ This disorderliness may have been manufactured insofar as even the city fathers knew that as they were climbing rungs to power in the mid-1930s, they were perpetually battling what were termed officially as “vigilantes” and “thugs.” The San Pedro docks were a notable target.³² Harry Bridges, chief of the stevedores, warned pointedly about the presence of “spies and saboteurs at Los Angeles.”³³ Soon the National Committee of the CP warned of the “large number of stoolpigeons and provocateurs” flooding into their ranks.³⁴

Bridges may not have suspected Nat Honig of being a turncoat. He joined the CP in 1927 and was cadre until 1938, often serving as a reporter, providing a rationale for inquisitiveness. He was the representative of the U.S. party and the affiliated Trade Union Unity League to the Red International Labor Unions in Moscow—a kind of fraternal twin of the Comintern of communist parties. It was there that he bumped into William Schneiderman of the California party,

29. Arthur Clark to W. Ricardo Hill, 12 August 1936, Box 5, Norman Leonard Papers.

30. Minutes, 14 May 1937, Box 8, Norman Leonard Papers. On the Hollywood strike, see Horne, *Class Struggle in Hollywood*.

31. Confidential Memorandum, 16 September 1935, Box 8, Norman Leonard Papers.

32. Special Report, 3 February 1936, Box 1, San Francisco Employer Surveillance.

33. Report, 10 March 1940, Box 1, Harper Knowles Papers.

34. Statement by CPUSA National Committee, 2 April 1940, Box 4, Lisette and Sam Kutnick Abraham Lincoln Brigade Collection, SFSU (abbrev. Kutnick Collection).

dispatched at the behest of the Comintern and his fellow Smith Act defendant, Frank Spector, there in his capacity as a representative of William Patterson's International Labor Defense. They would attend biweekly Comintern meetings providing a smorgasbord of updates on revolutionary struggles globally, allowing for a gauge of the international correlation of forces. He was often seen at Schneiderman's room at the Hotel Lux in Moscow and recalled spotting the most influential Communist beyond the ranks of the Soviet party, Italy's Palmiro Togliatti. He was in and out of the Comintern office on Mokhavia Street too. He recalled fervent discussions about doings at Pacific docks, especially during and after the General Strike of 1934. Returning to San Francisco, he recalled detailed meetings with Bridges and his chief lieutenant, Louis Goldblatt, and recalled a 1936 gathering where Schneiderman asserted: Prepare for a general strike as a "rehearsal...for seizure of power [by] the party and working class." Yet these revelations did not emerge in a wistful CP authorized memoir or even in an oral history—but at the Smith Act trial of Schneiderman, as evidence for the defendant's alleged perfidy. Honig got \$25 per day for testifying against Communists—he had appeared in seven cases before materializing in Los Angeles. Once arrested in Seattle for stealing a book, he proceeded to throw the book at Schneiderman. He had receipts, having served on the staff of the *Daily Worker* in Manhattan and the TUUL organ since March 1930. He also sought to show that the pathbreaking General Strike was actually planned in Moscow or alternatively by top domestic Reds who sought approval from the Comintern. He also fingered Bridges, saying he had seen him at CP meetings, despite the labor titan's denial that he was a Red. He heard CP leader Sam Darcy speak at the precedent shattering Comintern gathering of July 1935 in Moscow, and also heard him aver of the General Strike that "our Party participated as a Party," probably accurate, while underlining that the party sought to "overthrow" the government "by force and violence," dubious at best.³⁵

Yet perhaps anticipating this Moscow-baiting onslaught, Schneiderman testified at the trial that his party disaffiliated from the Comintern "at a special convention" in 1940, well before that body's official dissolution in 1943 in the midst of illusions emanating from Tehran that a new era of comity between capitalists and Communists had arrived.³⁶

Schneiderman could toss bodies off the dogsled interminably, but the ravenous wolves would still pursue. At the Smith Act trial, attorney Leo Branton—the link between Communists and the Panthers and Angela Davis whom he also defended—recounted how the LAPD's Red Squad "was going into Communist Party meetings, going into the homes of members, confiscating property, arresting them, holding them without warrant, searching the premises,

35. 5 May 1952 and 20 May 1952. Record Group 21, Boxes 1343-1344, USA v. Schneiderman, NARA-Riverside.

36. 6 June 1952, Box 1345, USA v. Schneiderman, NARA-Riverside.

taking the property.”³⁷ These outrages were occurring during the “heyday” of the Reds and, like a drip-drip, they served to erode their influence.

Unsurprisingly, the General Strike of 1934 was front and center—as if it were a nightmare to be avoided at all costs³⁸—when the moment arrived to disassemble the CP. Antagonists of the union encouraged vigilante raids upon the strikers and spread the rumor that they were arming. An office of the CP organ was destroyed—a hint of what could easily return.

When an agent was dispatched in late 1939 to confer with “Slim” Connelly, this future Smith Act defendant was described as “extremely cordial.” Yet at the downtown office of the left-leaning Congress of Industrial Organizations sited at 212 Third Street, this cordiality was enabled, since “for caution he has two men at night in his office.”³⁹ These security measures may have been helpful in extending Connelly’s lifespan, for he not only had to evade direct agents of the state but, as well, there were operatives of the para-militaristic American Legion who had their own surveillance dragnet that cooperated with the state.⁴⁰

This neat division of labor reflected what even the CP acknowledged was dramatic growth during the Depression Decade. By late 1936 the CP organ on the Pacific Coast asserted that L.A. had tied with San Francisco with 156 new members recruited over an eight-week period. “San Diego remained the ‘problem child’...with only five recruits added to its 150 members”⁴¹—a total that this border town would hardly see in the aftermath of the Smith Act trial of 1951. Dorothy Healey, a party leader for decades in the Southland, thought that the key to understanding San Diego was the reality that there was “always [a] concentration of Naval Intelligence” there.⁴²

* * *

The attention to William F. Nelson, a Negro, was all the more revealing since ordinarily more attention was paid to the real or imagined presence of Jewish-Americans—putting to one side how they were distinguished from others defined as “white.” Typical was an LAPD report from late 1936 involving surveillance of a meeting at 123 North Lake Street, not far from downtown. The CP was a sponsor of this public gathering that included Leo Gallagher presiding in his capacity as

37. Colloquy with Leo Branton, 23 July 1952, Box 1346, USA v. Schneiderman, NARA-Riverside.

38. Testimony of Oleta Yates, 18 June 1952, Box 1345, USA v. Schneiderman, NARA-Riverside.

39. Report, 23 December 1939, Box 1, Harper Knowles Papers.

40. H.L. Knowles of Radical Research Committee of American Legion to John Mustak, 29 July 193, Box 3, Harper Knowles Papers.

41. *Western Worker*, 2 November 1936.

42. Dorothy Healey, Oral History.

local leader of William Patterson's International Labor Defense. A quarter gained admission, and present were about 1000 men and women, evenly divided—but somehow the observer was able to ascertain that 95% of those present were Jewish.⁴³ When the actor Lionel Stander addressed a "Peace Strike" at UCLA in 1937, the agent again ascertained that he was "[a] Jew from his appearance."⁴⁴ Retrospectively, the degree of anti-Jewish bigotry in the Southland was breathtaking. "Who are Fifth Columnists?" was the querulous inquiry from the curiously named "American Gentile." The answer was simple: "Jewish propaganda leads in the field."⁴⁵

Ben Margolis, who attained notoriety as an attorney for Communists—and to a degree, Black radicals—was Jewish. His parents, who were secular, fled Eastern Europe—his father departing Latvia and his mother abandoning Bialystok, Poland. Yet being in the eye of the hurricane as Communists were being demonized did not lead to a perception that he too was being targeted on this perilous plane. "I must say that I have not in my lifetime," he said in the 1980s, well after his 1910 birth, "directly experienced a great deal of anti-Semitism, although I have been aware of a great deal of it, with respect to others." This was so, notwithstanding his fling in Hollywood, toiling as a film extra. He was intimately involved in the defining battles of the 1930s, recalling with texture the trial of Tom Mooney, accused of a 1916 bombing, noting the witness at trial averring that she had seen the defendant place the satchel which contained a bomb at a sensitive site. He also knew the power of a mass movement, recalling as well the moment when California Gov. Culbert Olson—the first Democrat to hold this lofty spot in four decades—"made his inaugural speech, stepped to one side and signed the pardon for Tom Mooney, right then and there." Margolis had "worked in Olson's campaign," as well as Sinclair's, and felt his reliance on electoral politics had paid dividends. Early in his career, he was a Communist and thus was familiar with the inner workings of the local party, which was different from other regions. For there was a cushion of wealth with Hollywood types that "made \$2500 a week or \$5000 or \$10,000...and these people were generous and did give to the party." (By way of comparison, \$5000 in 1938 would be worth over \$100,000 today). Hanns Eisler, the famed composer and frequent collaborator with Bertolt Brecht, was reputedly close to the Comintern itself (he had helped to compose its anthem), and also close to a man near the top of the pyramid of Hollywood: Charles Chaplin. Eisler was a "good friend", a "very, very close

43. Report by LAPD, 3 November 1936, Box 8, Norman Leonard Papers.

44. Report, 28 April 1937, Box 8, Norman Leonard Papers. See also *Tocsin: The West's Leading Anticomunist Weekly*, 20 November 1961, FC 06 0166 01, CSU-Fullerton: Richard Criley, a UC history student who in 1935 chaired what was billed as the first major "antiwar" strike on campus...later headed the [Young Communist League in California]. When five UCLA students were suspended for their activism in 1934, Criley urged a student strike at Berkeley. See also *San Francisco Call Bulletin*, 31 October 1934. Stander was, in fact, Jewish.

45. "American Gentile," 23 October 1940, Box 1, Jerry Voorhis Papers.

friend" of the auteur, and Chaplin, said Margolis, was a "very, very, very rich man—and I mean he was very rich."⁴⁶ This uniqueness was bound to distinguish Southland radicals from their counterparts elsewhere.

This obsessive focus on who was Jewish was parallel to the related obsession: Who was actually a Communist? By 1938 the CP eroded a bit of the mystery when—again—it put forth a slate of candidates for high office, including *grande dame* Anita Whitney as State Controller; Leo Gallagher for Secretary of State; Pettis Perry for the Board of Equalization; Emil Freed for Congress; future Smith Act defendant Oleta Yates for the state legislature—and six other congressional candidates, two for the State Senate and 13 for the assembly.⁴⁷ Reportedly, the party received 150,000 votes for the top of their ticket in 1938, obtaining 3% of the vote statewide, which promptly led to a concerted effort to oust them from the ballot, then illegalize them altogether by 1951.⁴⁸ By 1940, the State Election Commission in Sacramento had moved to uphold the maneuver by a radio station to bar a CP broadcast in L.A., the hallowed First Amendment aside.⁴⁹ Then legislation was introduced that would debar attorneys who defended radicals, leaving the CP and their likes defenseless.⁵⁰

To be sure, the CP was building upon a foundation of socialist ideas laid by people such as Jack London, Frank Norris, Burnette Haskell, Thorsten Veblen, Henry George, John Steinbeck—and Sinclair—not to mention the currents wafting across the border from nearby Nevada. It was there that the "Wobblies," the Industrial Workers of the World, attained some of their more significant successes.⁵¹ As early as 1919, Oakland was viewed justifiably as the "Heartland of Communism,"⁵² laying a foundation for the CP and BPP alike.

Even the beleaguered Sinclair ran as a socialist, helping to steer the electorate to the left in the 1930s. Yet the CP—akin to Loren Miller—was unfavorable to his candidacy. "Their heckling was violent and bitter," he said, "attacking me," though he admits, "I do not recall any attempt at heckling during the last three

46. Ben Margolis, Oral History, 1984-1985, UCLA (abbrev. Ben Margolis, Oral History). See the File on Gerhart Eisler of the Comintern, brother of Hanns, in Box 419, Norman Leonard Papers.

47. Communist Election Platform, 1938, Box 32, Walton Phillips Pamphlet Collection, SFSU (abbrev. Walton Phillips Collection).

48. CPUSA, Pettis Perry, Chairman of California Communist Party; Anita Whitney and Oleta Connor Yates v. Governor Earl Warren, et al., 2 Civil Number 13, 704, Second Appellate District, Filed by Leo Gallagher of 5851 Avalon Boulevard, Los Angeles for appellants, 1942, Box 432, Norman Leonard Papers.

49. "Louise" for State Election Commission to Attorney G.R. Anderson of San Francisco, 22 September 1940, Box 437, Norman Leonard Papers. In the same box, see also Press Release, 20 September 1940, elaborating on this barring.

50. Letter to Charles Katz, 31 March 1943, Box 437, Norman Leonard Papers.

51. Steven Murdock, "Western American Communism: The Communist Party in California Since 1930," ca. 1969, Box 4, Noel/Harriman Papers (abbrev. Murdock, "Western American Communism").

52. Ralph Shaffer, "The Formative Years of Communism in the West," ca. 1970, Box 4, Noel/Harriman Papers.

months of the campaign." Still, he was red-baited furiously, accused of being a Communist dupe. The contradictory Sinclair also took time to visit the Neo-Nazi cleric Father Charles Coughlin in his Michigan lair—a "fine upstanding man," he said.⁵³ Schneiderman apologized for the lukewarm approach to Sinclair but retrospectively it was understandable why this race engendered confusion.⁵⁴

Reference to Nelson raises a related query: It's hard to say that this era, when the CP was in its heyday, was a negative for the NAACP. To the contrary, Thomas Griffith, Jr., writing from 1105 East Vernon and as of 1936 a leader in the L.A. branch, which he would be for years to come, informed William Pickens that his was the "outstanding branch of the western jurisdiction;" in the leadership was future Congressional Black Caucus member Augustus Hawkins.⁵⁵ This was partially because the streams of income from Communist-influenced Hollywood had downstream positive impact on antiracism, where the NAACP continued to operate. Also in 1936, E.W. Anderson of the San Diego branch was arguing in favor of a major push in El Centro in the Imperial Valley—and not nearby Yuma, Arizona—since the former was a "more thriving city with more of our race to draw from in the surrounding county and at one time it had a branch of the NAACP."⁵⁶ The branch in San Diego, a city with a growing stronghold for what came to be called the "Military-Industrial Complex," needed all the help it could muster. A few years earlier, a banner headline trumpeted, "White girls [nurses] object to mingling with Colored Nurses," compromising healthcare for all.⁵⁷

Wisely, given such retrogression, the NAACP sought to implant a foothold in the Southland where the CP had shown that Hollywood could be a kind of dollar factory. Walter White, the light-skinned leader who famously clashed with Du Bois, sensed this. He also catered to H.H. Hart of 355 South Rampart Avenue, who was behind "Negro Pictures Incorporated" and wanted to produce biopics on Booker T. Washington and George Washington Carver, a project that did not attain liftoff.⁵⁸

There was—and still is—a need for such an initiative. For as a vice president of the Motion Picture Relief Fund, "which takes care of [the] needy in industry," claimed, there was "quite a problem" with "unusual influx of colored cases."⁵⁹

Perhaps it was the scent of fresh currency in Hollywood that led the NAACP's Roy Wilkins in 1938 to hail the "Minstrel Show," widely viewed as a Negrophobic insult; but this Number 2 leader saw it as a "well established and

53. Upton Sinclair, *I, Candidate for Governor and How I Got Licked*, Pasadena: Sinclair, 1935, 5, 22, 45, 91.

54. Murdock, "Western American Communism."

55. Program of First State Conference of California Branches of NAACP, 9-11 July 1936, and attached Thomas Griffith, Jr. to William Pickens, Part I, Box G14, NAACP Papers-LC.

56. E.W. Anderson to William Pickens, 6 May 1936, Part I, Box G23, NAACP Papers-LC.

57. *San Diego Independent*, 2 September 1927, Part I, Box G23, NAACP Papers-LC.

58. H.H. Hart to Walter White, 8 June 1937, Part I, Box C299, NAACP Papers-LC.

59. Catherine Freeland to Walter White, 29 November 1940, Part II, Box A280, NAACP Papers-LC.

traditional form of entertainment and we can see no objection to it as such."⁶⁰ What about *Gone With the Wind*, the love letter to the slavocracy, courtesy of Hollywood? Wilkins found "there is no good reason why we should advise colored people not to go see this picture."⁶¹ Apparently, some in the leadership were assuaged when Sidney Howard, who took credit for adapting the screenplay, assured that he would "make no mention of the Ku Klux Klan and show no Negro violence," while adding the footnote that he "had already read Du Bois '[magnum opus] *Black Reconstruction*.'"⁶²

Perhaps Wilkins was fishing for a donation? For the man behind this monstrosity, David O. Selznick, found his production to be a "splendid tribute to the loyalty and fine character of the Negro."⁶³ Perhaps there was a division of labor between the top two leaders? For Wilkins's supervisor, White, upbraided Selznick, blaming this box office dynamo for sparking the idea of reviving its lineal ancestor, *The Birth of a Nation*, meaning an "alarming recrudescence of the Ku Klux Klan" and a "tremendous revival of Confederate and anti-Yankee sentiment."⁶⁴

While reprimanding Selznick, White cultivated Walter Wanger, a producer who collaborated fruitfully with the Communist scribe John Howard Lawson. He included Paul Williams, one of the more affluent Negroes in the Southland, in his doings: "I have great confidence in his judgment,"⁶⁵ said White, which helped to open the door further for this man gaining renown as "architect to the stars."⁶⁶ White's adroit cultivation seemed to be paying off when Wanger produced *Sundown* and agreed to hire "60 Negroes," including UCLA star Kenny Washington, along with his companion Woody Strode and the coming star Dorothy Dandridge.⁶⁷

Well aware of the funds to be raised, and the growing strength of progressivism in the Southland, both of monumental profundity for his organization—and the magical pixie dust brought by consorting with stars—soon White was joking, in part, "pretty soon you will be thinking I am commuting between Hollywood and New York!"⁶⁸ Even this apparent joke was hardly minor. As of 1941, it was not unusual for a train ride from New York to Los Angeles to

60. Roy Wilkins to Jack Nadel, executive director of YMHA, New York City, 11 February 1938, Part I, Box G299, NAACP Papers-LC.

61. Roy Wilkins to Barbee W. Durham, 31 January 1940, Part II, Box A277, NAACP Papers-LC.

62. Sidney Howard to Walter White, 5 July 1938, Part II, Box C15, NAACP Papers-LC.

63. David O. Selznick to Walter White, 2 April 1940, Part II, Box A280, NAACP Papers-LC.

64. Walter White to David O. Selznick, 26 March 1940, Part II, Box A280, NAACP Papers-LC.

65. Walter White to Walter Wanger, 20 November 1940, Part II, Box A280, NAACP Papers-LC.

66. Karen Hudson, *Paul Williams, Architect*, New York: Rizzoli, 1993.

67. Walter Wanger to Walter White, 16 June 1941, Part II, Box A280, NAACP Papers-LC.

68. Walter White to Walter Wanger, 20 January 1942, Part II, Box A280, NAACP Papers-LC.

effortlessly swallow days and nights, compromising the efficiency of a busy executive administering a national organization.⁶⁹

This was only a slight exaggeration. September 1940 found White again in L.A.—“for engagements...with certain movie stars with the hope of interesting them in making contributions,”⁷⁰ as he gloated about encountering this newfound cash machine.

Yet as was so often the case, Wilkins had created an opening for those to his left, as the CP launched a vigorous crusade against the attempt to revive the defamatory *The Birth of a Nation*, the pro-Klan cinematic travesty: “it must not be revived,” bellowed the *Daily Worker*, in words filed away by the NAACP itself; least of all should there be a “talkie remake.”⁷¹

But it was not just this aforementioned Wilkins howler that was a godsend for those to their left. George Johnson of Howard University broke the news that should have been known: Working-class Negroes objected to the “snootiness” of the Association, including “increasing the opportunities for the more fortunately circumstanced members of the race to socialize with ‘the better class of white people,’” a neat summation of White’s approach in Los Angeles. Twisting the knife, he added that there was “little doubt in my mind but that the success of the National Negro Congress,” a reviled so-called “Communist Front,” “was due in large measure to this condition.” And even though there were “only about 2500 Negroes in Sacramento proper,”⁷² he seemed to wonder if White’s time would be better spent in this Cowtown capital, lobbying on behalf of Black California, rather than glitzy Tinseltown.

If the Howard man had been able to eyeball White’s communications with Thurgood Marshall, his suspicions might have been confirmed. “You should have seen [the] luncheon Walter Wanger gave,” he said gushingly. The “swank Victor Hugo Restaurant at Beverly Drive and Wilshire Boulevard in Hollywood” was the luxurious locale. “Joan Bennett was on my right and Helen Gahagan [was] on my left,” said the swooning, starstruck boss.⁷³

More in tune with the coming zeitgeist was the view of Charles Marshall of the Manhattan Artist Bureau—a “Negro agency for [the] Negro artist”—who sagely informed White that “major motion picture companies are reluctant to show the Negro in any way but the worst.”⁷⁴ Even Marc Connelly defected. Writing “Dear Walter” from 1615 Pandora Avenue in tony Westwood, he initially was “happy about” the “script” that he “delivered to MGM” that led to *Cabin in the Sky*—but now, he said apologetically, “I don’t wish my name to be connected

69. Thomas Griffith to Roy Wilkins, 9 November 1941, Part II, Box A24, NAACP Papers-LC.

70. Walter White to “Mr. Morrow,” 14 September 1940, Part II, Box A545, NAACP Papers-LC.

71. *Daily Worker*, 1 November 1942, Part I, Box A274, NAACP Papers-LC.

72. George Johnson to Walter White, 21 October 1940, Part II, A545, NAACP Papers-LC.

73. Walter White to Thurgood Marshall, 15 November 1940, Part II, Box A545, NAACP Papers-LC.

74. Charles Marshall to Walter White, 19 June 1938, Part I, Box G299, NAACP Papers-LC.

with" this "disservice to racial relations"; still apprehensive, he advised, "Please treat this confidentially." This exchange also exposed a rift between often progressive screenwriters, part of a union founded by a Communist, John Howard Lawson, and the mangling of their handiwork by butchering executives.⁷⁵

This defamation did not bode well for the Negroes who were beginning to arrive in a steady stream in the Southland, as the clouds of war gathered ominously, meaning the gradual ramping up of enhanced military production with its spinoffs. But injurious defamation did not cease: Rather, it migrated to the trains delivering them at the downtown L.A. station. "Colored people have to sit on the benches in the baggage cars," Wilkins lamented, since the "Southern Pacific runs through Jim Crow territory and has to obey the law."⁷⁶

Jim Crow did not take a holiday while White was consorting with the stars. Pasadena continued to grapple with the idea that Negroes should be barred from swimming pools. The purblind officials thought a reasonable compromise was to allow Negroes to swim on "International Day,"⁷⁷ which presumably had the related racism-infected advantage of denaturalizing Negroes, resuscitating the discredited *Dred Scott* high court case of 1857.

Other than pools, schools were a flashpoint. Both implicated the flower of youth during a time of raging hormones, suggesting that despised taboo, miscegenation. In the heart of the city, local branch leader Thomas Griffith reported dishearteningly in early 1941 that "white students" were "burning six Negro students in effigy" at "Fremont High School."⁷⁸ There was a "fascist element," said enraged publisher Charlotta Bass, as she was repulsed by their blood-curdling cry: "We want no [niggers] in this school. This is a white man's school."⁷⁹ As late as 1947, reports emerged of a "riot" there "because of the attendance at the school of a few Negroes"; this was "absolutely Communist inspired," said a biased observer, "prepared by the American Youth for Democracy."⁸⁰ Actually, 500 students stormed out of the school in protest of six Negro girls enrolling, with—again—the lynching of a "Negro in effigy," according to an observer.⁸¹

75. Marc Connelly to "Dear Walter," 17 November 1942, Part II, Box A248, NAACP Papers-LC.

76. Roy Wilkins to Thomas Griffith, 18 September 1941, Part II, Box A24, NAACP Papers-LC.

77. Thomas Griffith to Frank Reeves, 5 May 1941, Part II, Box B66, NAACP Papers-LC. In the same box see the Press Release, 28 November 1941 concerning International Day.

78. Thomas Griffith to Roy Wilkins, 3 March 1941, Part II, Box C14, NAACP Papers-LC.

79. Excerpt from Bass's Memoir, ca. 1960, Box 18, South Los Angeles 20th Century Documentation Collection, Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research, Los Angeles (abbrev. South L.A. 20th Century).

80. Attorney Ben Beery to State Senator Jack Tenney, 20 March 1947, in Records of the California Un-American Activities Committee, F 1.2, Location 93-04-12, D4L56 P1, CSA (abbrev. CUAC Records).

81. *Los Angeles Daily News*, 18 March 1947, Part II, Box 136, NAACP Papers-LC.

While White was peacocking down Wilshire Boulevard, strutting alongside movie stars, in nearby Pasadena, the swimming pool matter would not disappear. Edna Griffin of the branch also raised another fraught case of a "white man taking a colored girl into the hills, brutally beating her and using her [*sic*]." Then there was the often-unspoken weakness, shrouded by the ascension of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: "We do not get the cooperation of many of the Ministers," she lamented, "especially in our larger churches, to be frank" since "our people are more filled with Churchitis [*sic*] and selfish Ministers than we can seemingly break through."⁸²

Pasadena was on fire, wracked with pain, yet White's response was that he was unable to meet with members since "one of the two days for which appointments are being made for me in Hollywood would be taken away."⁸³

All the while, Vultee Aircraft, a manufacturer in this growing sector, brusquely informed the National Negro Congress, "it is not the policy of the Company to employ people other than the Caucasian race."⁸⁴ The allied point was made by the rightist American Legion, which observed accurately of the Southland that "within this area is concentrated a greater vital defense production than within any like area" nationally⁸⁵—and Negroes were simply too unreliable politically to be allowed within sniffing range.

* * *

Pre-existing white supremacy plowed the ground for the sprouting of the suffocating weed that sought to strangle the Japanese-American community in L.A. in the aftermath of the bombing of Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941. "Blood will tell," was the ghastly message from Mayor Fletcher Bowron, so they had to go; the city, he said, "cannot run the risk of another Pearl Harbor."⁸⁶ This was his repetitive theme: As he told Congressman John Costello weeks after the date that was said to live forever in infamy, "We are likely to have a second Pearl Harbor in Southern California," speaking of the most populous Japanese urban node east of Tokyo.⁸⁷

Hysteria was whipped up accordingly about what was referred to as "total espionage" by this besieged Asian-American community, as "grocery stores,

82. Edna Griffin to William Pickens, 13 June 1940, Part II, Box C17, NAACP Papers-LC.

83. Walter White to Mrs. W. Miller Kelly, 18 October 1940, Part II, Box C17, NAACP Papers-LC.

84. W. Gerard Tuttle, manager of Vultee Aircraft, to Robert Robinson of National Negro Congress, 2 August 1940, Box 32, Walton Phillips Collection.

85. Report, 20 February 1942, Box 1, Jerry Voorhis Papers.

86. Statement, 6 February 1942, Box 52, Fletcher Bowron Papers, Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif. (abbrev. Fletcher Bowron Papers).

87. Mayor Bowron to Congressman Costello, 22 January 1942, Box 52, Fletcher Bowron Papers.

barber shops, fishing boats" were scrutinized as vectors for spying. Japanese language schools, instead of being smiled upon as centers for mutual understanding, were viewed gruffly as centers of intrigue. This inflammatory report that passed through the corridors of power at City Hall, noted nervously that "through the migration of Japanese into Los Angeles 'Negro Quarter on Central Avenue a central problem is arising. They operate dives, pool rooms, restaurants and other fronts for their infiltration," taking advantage of an ingrained Black alienation hatched during enslavement. "The marijuana traffic is conducted through these business establishments," and this narcotic was hardly assuaging the "race hatred and determination [that] is fostered and propaganda fed to the Negroes and Mexicans." As the purveyor of this mean-spiritedness figuratively narrowed his demented visage, he found it a "curious fact that the night before the bombing of Pearl Harbor, a Saturday, all of these Japanese joints were locked up." Also suspicious was that "a colored attorney Hugh E. Macbeth," sited at the "Lissner Building, 524 South Spring Street" in the heart of downtown, "has seen fit to champion a Japanese private detective who has endeavored to secure a permit to carry concealed weapons...this is all tied in with the very dangerous condition being fostered and pressed by the Japanese in a colored town,"⁸⁸ a veiled reference to the close ties between the two "peoples of color" that had developed before 1941.⁸⁹

Tragically, City Hall was reflecting a rising current among a broad swath of Euro-Americans. Adolphe Menjou, the untalented actor whose popinjay posture riveted postwar investigators of the CP in Hollywood, anticipated his vaudeville act when he shrieked, "I hope never to see a Japanese face again in my life." Mayor Bowron, scurrying to keep up with events, upped the ante: "There are not and never can be such a thing as Japanese Americans. They are all Japanese," he yawped, "they can never be Americans." Broadcasting his bile on KECA radio at 7:45 PM on 26 May 1943, he demanded "removal of the Japanese menace."⁹⁰

Alfred Cohn, like a latter-day Iago, then fed the mayor's delirium, pointing out that in the three daily papers in L.A. which printed bilingually, "two of these were entirely pro-Axis before war was declared. The other one," quite slyly, "was pro-Axis in its Japanese language section and pro-American in its English section," while "several of those interned were 'turned in' by business rivals," quite typically. The vaunted First Amendment was shredded as "nineteen Shinto Temples in Los Angeles" were tormented.⁹¹

Again, taking to the airwaves, Mayor Bowron continued to fan the flames of intolerance. He recalled his journey about a year before Pearl Harbor to the South

88. Report, n.d., ca. 1942, Box 52, Fletcher Bowron Papers.

89. Horne, *Facing the Rising Sun*, passim.

90. *Los Angeles Daily Journal*, 4 June 1943, Box 52, Fletcher Bowron Papers. See also *Un-American Activities in California. Report of the Joint Fact Finding Committee*, Sacramento, 1943, SFSU.

91. Alfred Cohn to Mayor Bowron, 21 January 1942, Box 52, Fletcher Bowron Papers.

Pacific, including Australia, the Dutch East Indies [later Indonesia], Timor, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Guam, Wake, Midway—and Pearl Harbor too. “Everyone,” he said, “realized that the Japs [sic] were going to move in that direction.” He also acknowledged that as a result, in the Southland “our greatest concern was sabotage. The local Japanese population was carefully watched.” On 8 December 1941, he said, he heard from Mayor Fiorello La Guardia of New York City and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt—the latter notably alarmist in her rhetoric.⁹²

It was not alarmist to the mayor, however. As he told U.S. Senator A.B. Chandler of Jim Crow Kentucky, about a third of “all the Japanese [on] the Pacific Coast” were in the Southland, and about a quarter of all of this group in the U.S. as a whole were in his backyard, making this region a “center of activity and intrigue.” These wily folks pursued a “strategy...to appear inoffensive and friendly,” but he was not fooled. They “should be watched” even while interned, as they were. What about the heralded U.S. Constitution and its promise of equal rights? “His birth in this country cannot be the determining factor,” he yelled, as he breathed new life into the *Dred Scott* denaturalization decree. Anyway, the “foreign born” were “far less dangerous than many who were born in California,” since “right here in Los Angeles,” somehow the native born were “instructed in the matter of pretense.” He recalled that “from 1934 to 1937 Tomakazu Hori served as Japanese Consul in Los Angeles”—he did not mention how his Red Squad cooperated with those like him in surveilling Japanese-American Communists and labor activists. But now he was back in Tokyo demanding the death penalty for U.S. aviators who bombed his homeland and eerily seeking details on the Southland’s “water supply.” Warily, Bowron added that a “comparatively large percentage of local Japanese must have known what was coming before Pearl Harbor and were preparing for it.” Just like their alleged inoffensiveness and friendliness were viewed as emblems of culpability, “American born Japanese rather overdid it in proclaiming American loyalty.” The conclusion? Bar them from the Southland “for the duration,” for “too much popular sympathy must not be aroused for the Japanese,” as “human sympathy can play no part” in this draconian process.⁹³ Not atypically, the mayor’s febrile remarks wormed their way into the *Congressional Record*, serving to shape national opinion.⁹⁴

The mayor’s correspondent, Congressman Costello, became a generator of what was termed euphemistically as “relocation,” echoing prejudicial views as he did. A congressional report of 1942 “showed that numerous Japanese organizations operating in this country were fronts for the Japanese government and that numerous members of these organizations were engaged in espionage for

92. KECA Broadcast, 9 December 1942, 7:30 PM, Box 52, Fletcher Bowron Papers.

93. Mayor Bowron to Senator Chandler, 24 April 1943, Box 52, Fletcher Bowron Papers.

94. *Congressional Record*, 9 February 1942, Box 52, Fletcher Bowron Papers.

the Tokyo government." Viewed with ire were the "Youth Section of the Black Dragon Society" and the allied "Butoku-kai," which had "60 branches" in the U.S. alone—"50 of these in California"—and was thought to be the ideological vanguard for Japanese global conquest.⁹⁵ Overlooked in these overheated reports was the quotidian maltreatment of U.S. nationals on white supremacist grounds.⁹⁶

Seeking to make sense of this swirl of events was the NAACP, which unfortunately did not receive much ideological assistance from those with whom they shared a trench: The Communist Party did not stand tall as Japanese-Americans were interned.⁹⁷ (This was generally true. However, see the column by Communist John Pittman in 1943, upbraiding Gov. Earl Warren for his attacks on "loyal Japanese-Americans,"⁹⁸ an important qualifier. Belatedly, in February 1945, Oliver Boutte, port agent in San Pedro of the Communist-led National Maritime Union, found it "regrettable and unjustifiable" what had befallen Japanese-Americans—so welcome them home, was the message in a resolution "adopted unanimously," meaning by other CIO unions.⁹⁹)

Although conventional wisdom holds that the CP was thrown off kilter by the 1939 Berlin-Moscow non-aggression pact, Dorothy Healey contends that actually the contemporaneous conflict between relatively small Finland and its larger Soviet neighbor was more of a disorienting factor.¹⁰⁰ Coincidentally, the same Mayor Bowron who became unhinged at the mention of Japanese-Americans took the time to "greet" a Communist press conference in 1943.¹⁰¹

On the other hand, the pervasive antifascism of this titanic global conflict known as World War II, created objective conditions for anti-racist advance,¹⁰² including the potentially transformative case involving Schneiderman, to the effect—in part—that being a Communist could not easily translate into denaturalization; that he was defended gratis by GOP presidential hopeful Wendell Wilkie made this case all the more important.¹⁰³

95. U.S. House of Representatives, 78th Congress, 1st Session, Report #717, "Report and Minority Views on Un-American Activities on Japanese War Relocation Centers," 30 September 1943, Huntington Library.

96. Milton Phinney, "The Story of the Nittas: A Touching Human Document," unclear provenance, ca. 1945, Huntington Library.

97. See Horne, *Facing the Rising Sun*, passim. The CP may have been misled by the vitriol of Mayor Bowron since he had moved to break the back of the infamous Red Squad: Dorothy Healey, Oral History.

98. Citing *People's World*, 21 July 1943 in Bulletin, 29 July 1943, California Un-American Activities Committee, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

99. Oliver Boutte to Governor Warren, 8 February 1945, F3672, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

100. Dorothy Healey, Oral History.

101. Bulletin #11, California Un-American Activities Committee, 14 August 1943, F3640: 5876, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

102. See "Keynote Address Delivered by Hon. Culbert Olson, Governor of California, Before the Democratic State Convention at Sacramento....," 17 September 1942, Box 33, Walton Phillips Collection.

103. Carol King, "The Schneiderman Case," 1943, Box 32, Walton Phillips Collection.

This case was notably misleading, as it left the impression that a rosy dawn of rejection of anticommunism had arisen. Presumably, this would have placed the ultra-right on the defensive, a must for the Southland where a District Attorney, Burton Fitts, had been shot, and a private investigator looking into the activities of Mayor Frank Shaw had been bombed. Then the Hollywood star Harold Lloyd had led the drive to keep Negroes out of Beverly Hills, not altogether unsuccessfully, as today's demographic patterns suggest.¹⁰⁴

Thus, early during the war Wilkins was informed by a branch leader in Los Angeles that they should tighten ties with Charlotta Bass, soon to be *persona non grata* because of her refusal to embrace anticommunism. She was "very active" in the Association "for the past 25 years," said Thomas Griffith, and best of all "has been very liberal" in allocating "without costs...space" in her well-read *California Eagle*.¹⁰⁵

But that favorable opinion began to melt like a snowball in Southland heat once the Red Scare burned hot. Her acid-tongued competitor, Almena Lomax, was unrepentant. She said, "I remember particularly an interview with an FBI man by the name of Garrett, who came up in, I don't know, 1941, 1942, to talk to me about Mrs. Bass. They were going to, well, they considered her a threat to the war effort"—though she did not order them away post-haste. Her nonfeasance occurred though she acknowledged that "the left wing, that's what I'll call [them] for sake of anything else, you know, [were] very active in the Negro community during the war years. They gave a lot of direction to the Negro protest, to the Negro's drive [for a] Fair Employment Practices Committee" to combat job bias and occupational segregation.¹⁰⁶ By this juncture, Bass was not only serving in the leadership of Patterson's International Labor Defense but also on a prominent grand jury empanelment in the county.¹⁰⁷

So buoyed, quite remarkably, when White, on one of his frequent jaunts to the Southland, took precious time away from embracing stars to address his ostensible constituency at Second Baptist Church, a staggering 3500 assembled, as Griffith exuded joy at the sight of masses "standing in the hallways and aisles [and] sitting on the floor," while "2500 were turned away."¹⁰⁸ The Japanese capture of Singapore, days earlier, was a signal that white supremacy in the old way was on life support—the question remaining being what was to come. Sadly, the class interests of the Association, propelled by the ideological weakness on this front by the CP, intruded miserably. For days earlier, Clarence Muse, the talented Negro actor, was reported as "getting in control of produce now under

104. Hassan, *Loren Miller*, 123, 124, 132.

105. Thomas Griffith to Roy Wilkins, 9 April 1942, Part II, Box A24, NAACP Papers-LC.

106. Almena Lomax, Oral History.

107. Bulletin #5, California Un-American Activities Committee, 26 July 1943, F3640: 5876, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

108. Thomas Griffith to Roy Wilkins, 23 February 1942, Part II, Box A24, NAACP Papers-LC.

control of Japanese," with no apparent dissent from the committee that included the stalwart Loren Miller.¹⁰⁹

This was a missed opportunity in more ways than one. For 1942 was also the year that the Association chose to hold its first national convention in the Southland since 1928.¹¹⁰ This provided the occasion for national huddling on the dangers and bright new vistas simultaneously emerging. Even for those dullards who had not noticed the import of the war, Samuel W. Thompson, in a local organ, demanded that the gathering be canceled because of the "possibility of attack on the Pacific Coast by July [1942],"¹¹¹ a not unrealistic possibility. He instructed White of the many cancellations then cascading in the Southland, including the Rose Bowl football classic, the allied Parade, and horse racing. And in case some were too busy gallivanting with stars to notice, he attached the point that "there is a tense feeling here due to the evacuation of aliens," not to mention the catalyzed side effect of "Little Tokyo" being transformed into "Bronzeville," as Negroes arriving from Texas and points east, began to supplant this interned minority. Seeking to halt the runaway NAACP train, which was trying assiduously to take advantage of the misfortune of another minority, he instructed White, "in sending out matters from headquarters relative to the Japanese, that we refer to them as Japanese and not Japs [*sic*]."¹¹² Concurring with the demand for a cancellation, Roy Wilkins's riposte was to echo through the century until today: "The [NAACP] Board is not infallible in judgment," he insisted. "It has always seemed to me to be particularly weak in estimating Negro public opinion."¹¹³

109. Minutes, 16 February 1942, Part II, Box A24, NAACP Papers-LC.

110. Report from Thomas Griffith, 14 July 1942, Part II, Box A24, NAACP Papers-LC.

111. *Los Angeles Tribune*, 15 March 1942.

112. Samuel Thompson to Walter White, circa 1942, Part II, Box A24, NAACP Papers-LC.

113. Roy Wilkins to Walter White, 2 July 1942, Part II, Box A24, NAACP Papers-LC.

Chapter 3

Red Scare Rising, 1942-1949

Loren Miller, the presumed former Communist who became an architect of the juridical attack on Jim Crow in concert with the NAACP's Thurgood Marshall, was blunt: "It's one of the ironies of history that Earl Warren," the supposed hero of anti-Jim Crow forces given his role on the high court in overturning apartheid in 1954, "never got the Negro vote in California. Never," he repeated emphatically.¹

The man who presided over internment of Japanese-Americans—and future famed civil libertarian—served as California's governor during the essential era 1943-1953. He was a Republican; once the common wisdom of the bulk of Negroes was that this party was the ship, all else the sea. Thus, Miller's admonition was a reflection of partisan politics then, since Negroes had long since abandoned the GOP by 1943. But to hear Miller tell it, it was more than that. And, if Governor Warren's voluminous correspondence is any guide, he was presiding over a constituency and a state filled to the brim with reactionaries, hardly predisposed to be sympathetic to Negroes or Japanese-American—or Jewish-Americans, thought to be over-represented in the Communist Party. A missive from Jay Taylor was symptomatic: Benjamin Franklin, he said, "wanted a clause" in the revered U.S. Constitution "specifically excluding Jews," so what was the big deal about interning Japanese-Americans, he posed querulously. As for Negroes, he warned ominously, their specialty seemed to be "race riots," but "it is only a step to revolution" from there.² The L.A. counselor Leo Youngworth crunched the numbers and arrived at a startlingly bizarre conclusion: There were [1,500,000] Negroes in the U.S. in 1812, and as of 1943 there were 13 million, he estimated. So, if there are 300,000 of Japanese ancestry today, then in a century there would be an unacceptable 25 million.³ Elizabeth Buffum of 5226 Hollywood Boulevard also mixed the two minorities: "as the Jap [*sic*] can never be a white man, so he can never be loyal...we are facing a serious Negro problem which may

1. Loren Miller, Oral History.

2. Jay Taylor to Governor Warren, ca. 1943, F3655, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

3. Leo Youngworth to Governor Warren, 26 June 1943, F3665, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

not wait until the end of the war for a solution," so "why not clean up one mess at a time" by stopping the assumed "coddle" of the Japanese-Americans.⁴

In a "personal and confidential" report to the governor, the point was made that "many of the Nissei [Japanese-Americans] were engaged in subversive activities of the most dangerous character for many months prior to Pearl Harbor" since "for years the Japanese who operated the flower markets of Little Tokyo and the fishing boats off Terminal Island, the owners of restaurants and stores and the vegetable farmers were engaged in [espionage]." The "evidence is incontrovertible," it was said with panache, that "stores of food, rifles and ammunition and explosives were concealed." The Golden State was "teeming with Japanese subversive activities for years prior to Pearl Harbor"; this was an "established fact."⁵ The American Legion in San Luis Obispo alerted Sacramento that "one of their instructors" of Japanese-American youth found that the latter possessed "quite an elaborate library of German Military instruction books."⁶ Olive Jackson of Brawley, Calif., miles southeast of L.A., demanded that the governor "remember Pearl Harbor" since "[our] boys...were shot in the legs and backs from ground level and that the apparently loyal Japanese druggist, merchant, etc. burst out of his store in full military outfit and shot our boys," all of which was "well known," as the "apparent trust" in "the Japs [*sic*]" was betrayed brutally.⁷ David Johnson of 6357 Maryland Drive in L.A. told the governor likewise that "the Japanese Question is agitating the public mind more than anything else here in Los Angeles at the present time" since "they breed many times faster."⁸

Days later, the future hero of civil libertarians—Earl Warren—was cited in the press for the proposition that freeing Japanese-Americans from internment would be "laying the groundwork for another Pearl Harbor."⁹ A few months later he was told that "an unimpeachable source" asserted "that the Japanese may be on the Pacific Coast in about six weeks," which was seconded by another individual who "phoned...to the same effect."¹⁰ It was a sensitive moment for the governor who had in his possession a report, from a source from Japanese-occupied "Singapore in English," that highlighted persecution by Japanese-Americans. "Anglo-Americans are unable to respect [the] racial clause of [the]

4. Elizabeth Buffum to Governor Warren, 31 January 1944, F3666, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

5. Bulletin #12, California Un-American Activities Committee, 16 August 1943, F3640: 5876, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

6. Resolution of Post 66 of American Legion, 6 July 1943, F3663, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

7. Olive Jackson to Governor Warren, ca. 1943, F3640: 3664, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

8. David Johnson to Governor Warren, 9 June 1943, F3664, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

9. *Los Angeles Times*, 2 July 1943.

10. Memo to Governor Warren, 14 February 1944, F3666, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

Atlantic Charter even in their own country. How can they expect it to be expected to carry it out in other parts of the globe?"¹¹

Filed away by the governor was an illustrative cartoon showing a German, an Italian and a Japanese kissing the posterior of Uncle Sam with the caption, "of the three—the Jap [*sic*] is the worst."¹²

Japan was just across the Pacific, and yet another woman militant, identifying herself as L.L. Carmichael of San Francisco, sent the governor a clipping indicating, "Japs [*sic*] fined for illegal hunting," and it was "disturbing to know that Japanese are permitted to wander off the reservation having firearms...where did they get the shotgun shells." Her conclusion? "Japs [*sic*] intend to set fire to our forests."¹³

From fire to water: Frank Wilton of 2508 Saturn Avenue in Huntington Park by his own admission was barely repressing "Jap [*sic*] bomb jitters" since "thirty years ago," around 1913, Los Angeles "had a threat that the Japanese were going to poison"—drumroll of emphasis—"our water supply." He was a photographer then for a local newspaper and "took photos of them frolicking by 'the bank of our drinking water intake.'"¹⁴

An outsider, C.K. Leslie of the Department of Agriculture in Washington, wondered how to distinguish U.S. nationals of Japanese ancestry from their Chinese and Korean counterparts: his solution? "Make them wear a badge,"¹⁵—presumably not a yellow star.

Actually, for many Euro-Americans there was the problematic of not only competing with those of Japanese ancestry statewide and oceanwide but the distinct possibility of being vanquished in the process. This could accelerate a preexisting, anxiety-ridden white supremacy or, perhaps, it could lead to a sober reflection that this system of racialized bias was not sustainable, leading to an agonizing retreat from centuries-long anti-Blackness.

Continuing what came to be called "Founding Father Chic," a woman then residing at 1272 Summit in Pasadena, reminded the governor—supposedly—that "twenty years before his death," Thomas Jefferson himself asserted that "all Gentile children would be slaves to the Jews if the influx of Jews were not prohibited."¹⁶

The governor was reminded by the portentously named "Emergency Committee of United German American Societies" of California that the "German

11. Translation, ca. 1945, F3673, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

12. Cartoon, ca. 1943, F3665, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

13. Mrs. L.L. Carmichael to Governor Warren, 11 August 1943, F3665, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

14. Frank Wilton to Governor Warren, 31 December 1943, F3665, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

15. C.K. Leslie to Governor Warren 25 January 1944, F3666, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

16. Jean Second to Governor Warren, 7 March 1944, F3656, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

element in this country amounts to about 27%...of the entire country,"¹⁷ so be leery of crossing them, not least on matters that might be dear to their beloved homeland. Beryl C. Mier of L.A., who may have been a member of this community, advised the governor, also in 1943, that Congressman Samuel Dickstein of New York was "getting some more Jews into this country...six hundred thousand Jew [*sic*] refugees have been brought into this country in the past three years," which happened to be "six hundred thousand too many." Why? "Jew men" were determined "to ruin every white girl they can get hold of." The vector for this exploitation, it was said, was the "motion picture studios and the Jews in the studio have wrecked girl after girl," along with "young men as well by making them homosexual."¹⁸

From Los Angeles arrived the news, again in 1943, that "many problems" were "arising" because of the "great in-migrations of American Negroes and particularly in the so-called 'Little Tokyo' area."¹⁹ According to Loren Miller, the "constant waves of migration...upset old patterns, that upset old leadership all the time...because it's a new city. Every ten years it's a new city. So, the persons who were prominent twenty-five or thirty years ago are forgotten—or, even ten years ago are forgotten—because the new migrants never heard of [them]. So, that's what happened." The downside was that possibly "five-sixths of the Negroes who live in town" in 1967 when he was interviewed, "weren't even here when the Zoot Suit Riots," featuring Black-Brown unity were ignited: "never heard of 'em,"²⁰ complicating coalition.

After pressure exerted by the Reverend J. Raymond Henderson, a NAACP leader with a pastorate at the Second Baptist Church, politicians backed away from seeking to bar—somehow—Negro migration to Los Angeles. Henderson, about 60 in 1943 and born in Virginia, was among those in the "Baptist Ministers Union" who caused Mayor Bowron to repudiate a plan to halt this inflow. Revealingly, he was known to cooperate with the Communist-affiliated American Youth for Democracy.²¹

Fred Roberts was a leading Negro Republican and thought to be a descendant of Thomas Jefferson and his paramour Sally Hemings. As a member of the state legislature, he both introduced legislation to establish UCLA and welcomed Marcus Garvey to town. But by 1943 he was advising the governor's chief aide that "the racial situation is developing some alarming aspects" in that

17. Emergency Committee of United German American Societies to Governor Warren, October 1943, F3655, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

18. Beryl C. Mier to Governor Warren, 28 May 1943, F3655, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

19. Gary van Buskirk/Joseph Kaplan of Council of Social Agencies to Governor Warren, 30 October 1943, F3655, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

20. Loren Miller, Oral History.

21. *People's Daily World*, 9 December 1943 and 25 April 1944 in F 2.400, Box 10, D04159, 93-04-12, CUAC Records.

"Communists and radicals are seizing on every pretext to stir up the Negro people...something should be done,"²² he said alarmingly.

Governor Warren kept a file on the doings of Communists, which indicated that the wartime "dissolution" of the Comintern notwithstanding, CP leader Earl Browder "continues to work with Moscow" (as did the White House, for that matter). The Red seafarer Al Lannon, who "handles the couriers" to Moscow, was the link. The Golden State had its own "Un-American Activities" committee (not "un-Californian?") which opined warningly that "never in the history of the Communist movement has the Party such an array of intellectuals as they have at the present time. They number in the thousands and they continue to grow"; critically, these self-proclaimed revolutionaries now have "39,700 comrades in the various branches of military services in the United States."²³

Despite the Moscow-Washington alliance, the authorities continued to surveil Communists. And despite Moscow helping to rescue Washington from fascist hordes, "Lamar" of Riverside was among those who objected when an unnamed party "accused me of being a Communist," which was "ridiculous," he thought: "anyone who knows me knows I am not a Communist."²⁴ State Senator Jack Tenney, the prime circulator of such unsubstantiated rumors, had to retreat when he sought to red-bait the prominent Negro attorney in L.A., Walter Gordon. "I have known Walter since we were both youngsters in college," said the governor, "and we have been friends since those days"; indeed, "Walter coached my boy in football."²⁵

When American Youth for Democracy, as close to Reds as lips and teeth, gathered in 1944 at 631 West Adams, then months later at 2200 West 7th Street, an agent was present—and noted that Jerry Pacht was present,²⁶ who would materialize decades later in one of the many trials involving Angela Davis. When AYD gathered at Hollywood's Hotel Roosevelt in late December 1944, celebrated Black actor Rex Ingram was present, as well as Communist screenwriter Dalton Trumbo. Even recently installed Attorney General Robert Kenny showed up, as did unofficial surveillance.²⁷ Trumbo, who was to be jailed when the political climate shifted, was thought to be listed on CP rolls under the pseudonym Hal Conger.²⁸ When the often-hyperbolic *San Francisco Examiner* reported that "U.S.

22. Helen McGregor to Governor Warren, 6 March 1943, F3655, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

23. Report, June 1943, F3640: 5876, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

24. Bulletin #9, 6 August 1943, F3640: 5876, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

25. Governor Warren to Senator Tenney, 14 September 1943, F3640: 5876, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

26. First State Convention of American Youth for Democracy, 6-7 May 1944, then 8 July 1945, F 2.6, Location 93-04-12, CUAC Records.

27. Report, 31 December 1944, F 2.6, CUAC Records.

28. Report, ca. 1945, F586, Location D4161, CUAC Records.

Communists plan Hollywood citadel," Trumbo was in mind, and Sacramento anticommunists jumped to attention.²⁹

Seemingly, the racists had the same view, since it was then that Mary Randolph of the Compton-Willowbrook vicinity, soon to be renowned as a seedbed of Black culture, spoke up. But then she too was alarmed by the "serious situation" which had led to a "meeting of the white people...at which vigilantism and a revival of the Ku Klux Klan was discussed."³⁰ She was also present on Friday, 5 February 1944 at 11 a.m. in Willowbrook when a meeting unwound with Langdon W. Post, regional director of the Federal Public Housing Authority. She was asked, "You say that it is inevitable that a race war will come?" She responded: "Definitely it will...if you insist on putting Negroes in there, there will be trouble...[Negroes] are going to war as much as we are" and "they have started a war." Besides, she added, "Negroes who have lived in that community for years, they feel as we do about the Southern Negro coming in." Post then asked, "Do we have to have war to give the Negro a decent place to live?" Her pressing concern? "We cannot sell our homes" while Eleanor Roosevelt "stirs up the Negroes."³¹

By early 1945 the NAACP knew of a "proposed development of [a] 1200 private housing unit for the use of minority groups in the area of 130th Street in Los Angeles County" which "resulted in a storm of protest from the Chamber of Commerce and the City Council of Compton" notwithstanding an "acute housing shortage."³²

John Carter was in Berkeley, but somehow, he knew that in Watts hundreds of miles south, it was "now almost wholly Negro." Yes, it was "better maintained and the property represents better security than it did with its former residents," but that was hardly consoling. For he thought that the "same attitudes of defiance and self-assertion which have characterized the Negro in the District of Columbia" were now "appearing" westward. Wearily, he added, "we must be patient with this swing...which may last decades."³³

Katherine Kaplan too took severe objection to the "unprecedented immigration of Negro workers" to L.A., with severe impact on "housing." She knew that "Negro workers" were "essential for the maintenance of the city's rapidly expanding war industries" and that they were flooding into the city "at a minimum rate of 175 a day," this in late 1943. Thus, "Little Tokyo 'has become a colored ghetto" and "even storehouses and storefronts are being used for dwellings," making the town "ripe for epidemics, vice and race riots."³⁴

29. *San Francisco Examiner*, 10 June 1945, F1, Location D1156, CUAC Records.

30. Mary Randolph to Governor Warren, 7 January 1944, F3656, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

31. Minutes, 5 February 1944, F3640: 2292, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

32. Thomas Griffin to Roy Wilkins, 14 March 1945, Part II, Box C14, NAACP Papers-LC.

33. John Carter to Governor Warren, 24 January 1945, F3672, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

34. Katherine Kaplan to Governor Warren, 4 November 1943, F3640: 2292, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

This frenzy received a kind of endorsement—from Negroes. Amos Black was president and Leon Lewis, executive secretary of the Big Five Progressive Club in L.A. of 355 East 1st Street, which was “comprising,” they said, “several hundred Negro citizens” of the city who were “former residents of Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi.” Their opinion? “Our general welfare will be jeopardized by the returning Nips [*sic*] which would make more acute an already [existing] housing shortage.” Yes, many of them opportunistically had moved to Little Tokyo. But this had the upside of allowing them to keep “those sneaky little Tojos under close scrutiny.”³⁵

Supporters of the GOP presidential hopeful, Governor Thomas Dewey, sited at 118 South Cary in what they called “Bronzeville,” were of like mind. Morris Major Bowles and Eddie Duval were “disturbed” by reports of the return of the interned to their neighborhood. What would happen to those now employed in “shipbuilding” and “aircraft manufacturing, rubber plants and longshoreman chores.” They were “giving you timely warning,”³⁶ they instructed Warren. Actually, according to L.T. Mott of the state’s Division of Immigration and Housing, in Little Tokyo from Main Street to the river and from Macy Street south to Third Street, 15 square blocks, by early 1944 there were “twice as many Negroes” in that postage stamp-size area, “at the present time as there were Japanese originally.”³⁷

These carping Negroes were seemingly unaware of Elizabeth Harden of Anaheim, who demanded “ship them back to Japan,” speaking of the interned, since “if we had sent the Negroes back to Africa after the Civil War, many racial and other problems would not confront us now.”³⁸

Bart Andrews of Stockton merged the alleged perils as he found that with the “Communists dictating, behind the [FDR?] administration” and the “proposed return of the Japs [*sic*]” along with the “color line in connection with the nearly 14,000,000 Negroes and the Jew menace,” there was “plenty to do.”³⁹

Coincidentally, he underlined why racial reform was required, for Andrews’s comrades had their hands full. The woman who identified herself as Mrs. Leo E. Adams of Long Beach, averred that there was “shipping oil and scrap” to Japan prewar “mostly because the Jews had the run of things”—“who got the benefit, the Japs [*sic*] and the Jews did,” she said. “You go downtown in Long Beach” and find “every vegetable stand was taken over by Jews that Japs [*sic*] had.” But what

35. Report to Governor Warren, 22 April 1944, F3668, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

36. Morris Major Bowles and Eddie Duval to Governor Warren, 7 November 1944, F3669, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

37. L.T. Mott to “Mr. Koetitz,” 14 January 1944, F3640: 2292, Administrative Files, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

38. Mrs. Elizabeth Harden to Governor Warren, 23 September 1943, F3668, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

39. Bart Andrews to Governor Warren, 17 November 1944, F3668, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

of the Japanese-Americans fighting under the U.S. flag in Europe? She was unimpressed: They “probably killed lots of Italians thinking they would help Germany,” adding superfluously, she was “100% against Japs [sic].”⁴⁰

Perhaps she was reading the sensationalistic *Los Angeles Herald Express*, which routinely denounced “Jap [sic] lovers and Communists” who supposedly protected “wild, brute animal Japanese,” and whose tirades were retained by the governor.⁴¹

Negroes were being squeezed in the L.A. housing market, a problem that still pinches. Loren Miller, the attorney who tackled this matter, knew that “restrictive covenants” were “invoked against” those at the apex of Negro society, including the actor and singer Ethel Waters, the bandleader Noble Sissle, and the affluent entrepreneur Norman Houston.⁴² Benny Carter, the well-known Negro instrumentalist and bandleader, was sued in an attempt to bar Negroes from certain local neighborhoods, on the grounds—*inter alia*—that his presence devalued property values. A reporter wrote that the judge “held that since Negroes paid more for homes in the district than would white persons, the property’s value increased.”⁴³ A specialized architectural journal highlighted the property in question, “old but still gracious colonial houses in once fashionable West Adams Heights,” desired by “well-to-do Negroes” (they pointed to Louise Beavers, Hattie McDaniel and Ethel Waters, part of the uniqueness of L.A. that performing as a celluloid maid brought a level of wealth that could only be imagined by their non-celluloid counterparts).⁴⁴ One can well imagine what the Negro working class was enduring in a stressed housing market.

The sharp scythe of bigotry slashed deeply into the fortunes of the Negro affluent, forging a multi-class analysis within the NAACP—but with the assault on the left, this meant that the middle class was left at the controls. The problem was that the bulk of the constituency was not in this class. Still, it was hard to ignore the plight of Dr. Edna Griffin, described as “past president of the Pasadena chapter” of the Association, a “physician who is not allowed to practice in the hospitals in the city because of her race.”⁴⁵ Yet this apparent class bias was hard to disconnect from the troubling occurrence when Lucille Black, the group’s

40. Mrs. Leo Adams to Governor Warren, 29 November 1944, F3670, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

41. *Los Angeles Herald Express*, 20 June 1945, F3640-3656, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

42. Letter from Loren Miller, 5 October 1944, Part II, Box B131, NAACP Papers-LC. Recently, the late Black litigator Willis O. Tyler was honored in L.A. as the intersection of 2nd and Spring downtown was named in his honor. Among other things, he anticipated Miller when he argued that restrictive covenants also violated the rights of Euro-Americans and how they could sell their property, i.e., forcing all into a rigid white supremacy. This 1907 Harvard Law graduate also defended the Bruce Family in their 1920s fight to retain now valuable Manhattan Beach property. See *Los Angeles Times*, 30 September 2023.

43. *PM*, 8 August 1945, Part II, Box B131, NAACP Papers-LC.

44. *Architectural Forum*, January 1946, Part II, Box B131, NAACP Papers-LC.

45. Kay Beach to National Office, 19 February 1944, Part II, Box C17, NAACP Papers-LC.

membership secretary, reported that she was "Disappointed as I am that the Pasadena branch fell so far below the goal of 1000 members set for 1948. Last year the branch enrolled 861 members. This means that more than 500 persons in the community have not renewed their memberships to date"—a referendum on the NAACP agenda.⁴⁶

At the same time, officialdom persisted in pursuing their indescribable talent of discerning who was Jewish and who was not. This was a specialty of the statewide Un-American Activities Committee which in August 1943 monitored a Communist affair at the First Unitarian Church in Los Angeles: 200 were present but somehow their birddog was able to ascertain that "85%" present were Jewish, "6 Negroes and the rest white trash"; "many spoke, mostly in broken English...communication was read from Herb Sorrell," the leader of Hollywood unions "and others of the same ilk.... a couple police officers from the LA Red Squad," enjoying a new birth of freedom, "were also present."⁴⁷ Their efforts were aided immeasurably by Ernest Caldecott, Minister at First Unitarian, who turned over "penciled notes" to the authorities detailing what was going on at his church so they could "track down Un-American activities," adding irrelevantly, "I would want to do so,"⁴⁸ i.e., spy. This presumed man of the cloth may have been motivated to putatively violate his ethical obligations because earlier he came under scrutiny as a "known Communist sympathizer," a dangerous descriptor even during an antifascist war. By then, even the *Los Angeles Times*, the bastion of conservatism, was under suspicion, accused of endorsing La Rue McCormick, "(Communist) for State Senator" during the November 1942 elections. In a report monitoring American Youth for Democracy, Charlotta Bass was fingered, described archaically as a "Negress."⁴⁹

Still, officials continued seeking to ferret out the ethno-racial ancestry of presumed dissidents. At a "mock convention" of American Youth for Democracy, which was "open preferably to children between the ages of 13 to 19," the monitors somehow knew that the "greater majority of these members were of Hebrew descent, as easily noted," with a "definite lack of Negro youth."⁵⁰ At a "Teenage Mock Congress" in October 1944 sponsored by AYD at Virgil High School at 152 North Vermont, there were 110 present, the "greater number were Hebrews with about eight colored people and very few Mexicans."⁵¹ Minister Caldecott provided the invocation with no visible evidence of his taking notes to pass up the chain of command. Even Edmund T. Burke of Northrop Aircraft in

46. Lucille Black to Elbert White, 27 July 1948, Part II, Box C17, NAACP Papers-LC.

47. Report by Thomas Cavett, 4 August 1943, F3, Location, 93-04-12, D4159, P3, CUAC Records.

48. Ernest Caldecott to Senator Jack Tenney, 5 August 1943, CUAC Records. See also Second Report on Un-American Activities in California, 1945, 143, SFSU (abbrev. Second CUAC Report): Depicts the Unitarian Church as a "Communist meeting place."

49. Report, ca. 1944, F 2.6, CUAC Records. See also *Los Angeles Times*, 2 November 1942.

50. Undated report, F 2.6, CUAC Records.

51. Report, 8 October 1944, F 2.6, CUAC Records.

Hawthorne got in on the act, passing on intelligence about an AYD confab at 2200 West 7th Street: There were 140 present, he found, including "five colored people and a few Hebrews." Again, the future judge in the Angela Davis case, Jerry Pacht, was singled out. He also spent time "talking with Rosemary Smith, colored girl, who attends LACC [Los Angeles Community College]" and "learned that LACC has about forty members" of this purported subversive grouping including this "very attractive colored girl."⁵²

The men of the Un-American Activities Committee were paying ever more attention to Dr. H. Claude Hudson. As matters evolved, breaking emerging ties between the CP and NAACP became a strategic objective for them. He had signed a full-page ad in Bass's *California Eagle* in 1944 requesting aircraft workers to join a CIO union, thought to be Communist dominated. By 1947 he was thought to be "active in [the] third party movement" led by Henry Wallace. In 1947 he opposed the loyalty test for county employees, a dagger at the throat of the CP. By 1948 he was a member of the Advisory Committee of the Communist-influenced California Labor School sited in San Francisco.⁵³

Burke was described as "Chief, Plant Protection" at Northrop when he received raw intelligence on Attorney General Robert Kenny—who collaborated fruitfully with the left-wing National Lawyers Guild—and was described as working alongside the "CIO," progressive unions, "and the Communist elements" that "have launched a gigantic campaign against the continuation of the [Un-American Activities] Committee."⁵⁴

Curiously, this Northrop man was in intermittent contact with investigators as the state and corporate capital targeted their mutual opponents on the left.⁵⁵ Burke, aping his namesake, the fountainhead of Anglo conservatism,⁵⁶ spread his wings and acquiesced when "Ross Miller and a group of executives at North American Aviation have asked me to give them a talk," consisting of rabid anticommunist drivel.⁵⁷ Loren Miller observed that the "great...airplane manufacturers were located here: North American [Rockwell], Douglas...Lockheed [Martin] and Northrop [Grumman]. None of them hired Negroes,"⁵⁸ suggesting that those who objected may have been violating national security mandates at a time of war.

52. Edmund T. Burke to Jack Tenney, 12 July 1945, F 2.6, CUAC Records.

53. See *California Eagle*, 6 January 1944; *People's World*, 20 September 1947; *People's World*, 30 August 1947; *People's World*, 13 May 1948, F 2.131, NNC 93-04-12, D4158, CUAC Records.

54. Jack Tenney to Edmund T. Burke, 10 May 1945, F 2.6, CUAC Records.

55. Edmund T. Burke to Jack Tenney, 27 April 1945, F 2.6, CUAC Records.

56. Gerald W. Chapman, *Edmund Burke: The Practical Imagination*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967.

57. Edmund Burke to Jack Tenney, 2 March 1945, F 2.6, CUAC Records.

58. Loren Miller, Oral History.

It was not clear if Burke was present in October 1943 when a Communist convention unwound with 1200 present, with Pettis Perry, the Negro leader, chairing as the National Anthem was sung.⁵⁹

Burke's conferring may have facilitated the detailed report on the CP convention in Los Angeles of September 1944. There were 302 delegates present and 23 alternates representing 41 clubs or cells; there were 181 men and 131 women there; 11 were younger than 25; 152 were between 25 and 35; 76 were between 35 and 45; 41 were 45 and older. Club functionaries amounted to 162, and 12 were full-time cadre; 16 were listed as full-time cadre in "front groups." There were 122 industrial workers—hence Northrop's interest—95 white collar and professional workers, and 73 from basic industry, e.g., auto, steel, etc. There were 81 from the American Federation of Labor Unions, which dominated among skilled crafts, e.g., carpenters and electricians; 76 from the CIO, and 13 from independent unions; 181 had union cards and seven were veterans.⁶⁰

Party monitors were aware when CP leader Carl Winter departed in 1945 and was replaced by Nemmy Sparks, who joined as a member in 1922; formerly, he was in Wisconsin, where a party organ observed, he fought the "defeatist and pro-fascist role of the Socialist Party and the La Follette Progressive Party."⁶¹ These masters of surveillance may have known and been able to manipulate the fracas that then erupted between Sparks and Dorothy Healey; she considered him "hot tempered," which led to "terrible battles" and a "stormy" tenure for them both.⁶²

State Senator Jack Tenney, perhaps the leading anticommunist in Sacramento, was informed about Winter's transfer to Detroit. More to the point, Tenney was often the recipient—and distributor—of gossip, including the unverified notion that "aliens" in the CP were "dictating to the American people in the state of California," citing the failed attempt to deport Harry Bridges, leader of the stevedores. Schneiderman, soon to be tried in the Smith Act trial, was seen as "the alien" referenced, along with Sam Darcy, "alias Seuel Dardeck [*sic*]," who too "came from Russia," and Paul Cline, of "Jewish extraction, born in Russia," then serving as "Secretary of the Party in Los Angeles.... Darcy, Schneiderman and Cline are evidently all Russian Jews. Whether [top CP leader, Earl] Browder is a Jew or not, I don't know," said Tenney's interlocutor, "but from his profile he looks like some Jewish junk man had snared his mother."⁶³

Yet another Euro-American woman militant, Sarah Stone Neukaemper of Redondo Beach in L.A. County, repeated the macabre insult, "There are good and bad Japs [*sic*] and the only good ones are dead." Did not the FBI find a whole infantry battalion of invaders at Terminal Island not far distant from the

59. Report, 30 October 1943, F 2.6, CUAC Records.

60. Report, 25 September 1944, F 2.6, CUAC Records.

61. Copy of "CPA Record," May 1945, F 2.6, CUAC Records.

62. Dorothy Healey, Oral History.

63. Thomas Cavett to State Senator Jack Tenney, 24 May 1945, F1, Location D 1156, CUAC Records.

strategically sited waterfront at San Pedro?⁶⁴ Fearfully, Herbert Hudgins of a security engineering firm warned the governor that "Japan's planes will surely come like a thief in the night, bringing with them death and destruction. They will burn our cities and murder our people."⁶⁵

Some of Japanese ancestry were arriving in L.A. by early 1945; they were not invaders but citizens seeking to reclaim their property. Future double Nobel Laureate Dr. Linus Pauling, of the California Institute of Technology, found himself caught up in the resultant controversy. The county sheriff was told that an unnamed miscreant "painted on the garage door and on the mailbox" of this eminent scientist and activist a "Japanese flag and on the door a sign 'Jap [*sic*] lovers living here.'" Why? He happened to employ a Japanese-American "boy, George Nimaki," who handled "odd jobs."⁶⁶ The U.S. Attorney General warned the California governor that in Whittier, where future president Richard M. Nixon matriculated at the local college, there was "talk of lynching the Japanese who returned," for "carloads of 'nightriders' had planned to assemble." Sumio Doi, an "American citizen," then of "Placer County," was targeted as the offenders were seeking to "burn and dynamite his premises."⁶⁷

L.I. Hewes, Jr. of the American Council on Race Relations advised the governor during the Spring of 1945 that "anti-Japanese groups are planning to convene in Sacramento...initiating a state-wide anti-Japanese American organization."⁶⁸ Punctuating the concern was the report from Central California that "someone armed with a rifle fired five shots into two American Japanese homes near Livingston...near San Jose nine American Japanese awoke in the early morning to find their gasoline drenched frame home on fire. When they ran outside to fight the blaze, they had to dodge bullets fired from a moving automobile."⁶⁹

Figuratively, Japanese-Americans had left the fire of internment for the frying pan of "liberty," as they became repeated victims of attack⁷⁰—which the governor well knew. Adjutant General Victor Hansen told Warren aide Verne Scroggins as much, alerting him to an "increasing number" of violent acts involving the "organization of 'vigilantes,'" with the tacit approval of local sheriffs. The Attorney General was also asleep at the switch. Though Blacks and Reds alike prided themselves on combating the virulence of white supremacy, it was left to

64. Mrs. Sarah Stone Neukaemper to Governor Warren, 2 June 1943, F3665, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

65. Herbert Hudgins to Governor Warren, 7 June 1943, F3665, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

66. Homer Crotty to Sheriff Eugene Biscailuz, 7 March 1945, F3673, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

67. Attorney General Biddle to Governor Warren, 2 February 1945, F3673, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

68. L.I. Hewes, Jr. to Governor Warren, 20 April 1945, F3673, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

69. *Daily Californian*, 16 April 1945, F3674, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

70. *Washington Post*, 8 May 1945, F3674, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

Hansen to detail the "close relationship between the Japanese problem and the racial situation generally."⁷¹ The Urban League counted 4444 Negroes in San Diego in 1944, but 15,000 a year later, meaning "inevitable demonstrations of racial tension, unrest and hatred...complicated by the gradual return of the Japanese to this area."⁷² Even Harold Ickes of the FDR Cabinet was left to score "terrorism" in the Golden State.⁷³ Even after Tokyo's surrender, Gov. Warren continued to be informed by "daily...reports in the newspapers and on the radios of brutal doings against Japanese-Americans who are returning" from camps to their plundered neighborhoods.⁷⁴

* * *

There was good reason for both the CP and their liberal counterparts, the NAACP, to suspect that the antifascist war had delivered lasting dividends. After all, their mutual foe—the ultra-right—seemed to be back on their heels since they bore more than a passing resemblance to the villainous defeated regime in Berlin. Moreover, there had been progress by the CP in recruiting workers of Mexican origin, in light of the militant defense of this community as evidenced by the "Zoot Suit" imbroglio⁷⁵—June 1943 attacks on Chicano/a youth, young men not least spurred by their outfits—and the "Sleepy Lagoon" case, yet another crackdown on this beleaguered community, this time in August 1942.⁷⁶

The former reached the desk of Governor Warren when he felt compelled to inform his Negro ally, "Dear Walter" Gordon, that his "appointment of you to the so-called Zoot Suit Committee apparently provoked" hardly quiet anticommunists

71. Adjutant General Victor Hansen to Verne Scroggins, 11 May 1945, F3674, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

72. Memorandum, ca. 1945, Part I, Box 104, National Urban League Papers.

73. *San Francisco Examiner*, 14 May 1945, F3674. See also letter from Ernest S. Iyama, Japanese American Committee for Democracy, 6 July 1945, F3675, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA: He scorns "recent attacks" on his compatriots.

74. Harold Drevno to Governor Warren, 20 September 1945, F3640: 3675, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

75. Mauricio Mazón, *The Zoot Suit Riots: The Psychology of Symbolic Annihilation*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984. See also "Mrs. Markel" to Governor Warren, ca. 1943, F3640: 3664, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA. From 4422 1/2 Russell Avenue in L.A., she wrote: "I believe the Zoot Suit activity here is timed to take yours and the people of California's attention off the Japanese situation." Her recommendation? Keep them in "camps." For more on this case, see Second CUAC Report, 160.

76. Guy Endore, *The Sleepy Lagoon Mystery*, Los Angeles: Sleepy Lagoon Defense Committee, 1944. See also Eduardo Obregón Pagán, "Sleepy Lagoon: The Politics of Youth and Race in Wartime Los Angeles, 1940-1945, Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1996.

and racists.⁷⁷ Loren Miller said that the “Zoot Suit Riots petered out because...the people began to say they were coming over to the Negro community, over to us [on] Central...well, the Negro community sent word back” to bring it on. “We’d like to see anybody that wants to come over here and take somebody’s...trousers over here, cut somebody’s hair”—batteries inflicted upon Mexican-Americans. “We’ll be ready for them. So, they never showed up.” Miller thought that “Negroes were very incensed at the riots—very much incensed...they were very indignant. I recall calling the Mayor’s office myself...and threatening the Mayor’s office—big threat—if they didn’t stop...take the means to stop this business, that we were going to raise hell” and that if these miscreants were “looking around for any trouble,” they were “going to find plenty” among Negroes. Then the more irked Negroes decided to up the ante: “I told them that if anybody came up to Twelfth and Central, somebody was going to get killed and I didn’t think it was going to be Negroes. So, the Mayor’s office was very jumpy and said they had nothing to do with it” though “the riots couldn’t have gone on for half-an-hour without active police connivance.”⁷⁸

The “Sleepy Lagoon” case was an exemplar of “Popular Front” politics with Charlotta Bass and Revels Cayton rising to their defense, along with the Negro star actor Canada Lee, screenwriters John Howard Lawson and Dalton Trumbo, Communist labor leader Ferdinand Smith, and again, cineaste Orson Welles.⁷⁹ The U.S. Assistant Attorney General, Wendell Berge, stated the obvious that resolving this case satisfactorily was essential to the maintenance of “good relations” between the U.S. and Mexico.⁸⁰ This diplomatic angle involving a domestic “minority” distinguished the Southland from other urban centers. For his part, Walter White was quick to inform FDR and his cabinet that these “attacks primarily upon Mexicans, Negroes and other nonwhite groups,” with the “attackers” being “Southern whites,” was intolerable.⁸¹

By 1946, Emmet G. Lavery had served as president of Local 47 of the American Federation of Musicians, a pillar of Hollywood creativity. He was not necessarily a friend of the CP, recalling ruefully, “I saw Communists take over the local” he had headed. Yet he thought that “one of the greatest weasel words in modern law is Communist Front” since “there is hardly an organization in the average life of an average big city in this country to which you could not apply Communist Front on the theory there was one Communist in it”—an absurdity on its face. Thus, he confessed, “I supported Tom Mooney,” a cause célèbre dear to

77. Governor Warren to “Dear Walter,” 14 September 1943, F3640: 5876, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

78. Loren Miller, Oral History.

79. Sleepy Lagoon Defense Committee Stationery, 4 May 1944, Part II, Box A676, NAACP Papers-LC.

80. Wendell Berge to Walter White, 17 June 1943, Part II, Box A676, NAACP Papers-LC.

81. Walter White to FDR, Henry Stimson, Francis Biddle and Frank Knox, 11 June 1943, Part II, Box A676, NAACP Papers-LC.

the hearts of the Reds. And, yes, the "Anti-Nazi League was organized by V.J. Jerome and John Howard Lawson," Communists both. And, yes, La Rue McCormick, "known Communist functionary...initiated" organizing around the Sleepy Lagoon case and then ginned up press coverage, which did lead to Red advance among Mexican-Americans. So what? Like State Senator Tenney, Lavery claimed Irish parentage, but that did not necessarily mean they were on the same page concerning anticommunism.⁸²

The advance on this front was a reflection of demographic change. According to Enrique Buelna, in 1930, those of Mexican ancestry accounted for 97,116 of an L.A. population of 1.238 million, whereas by 1945, out of a population of 1.9 million, there were 272,000 from this community.⁸³ The Sleepy Lagoon defense was funded in part by actor-director Orson Welles and the luminous Rita Hayworth, who also, along with the actor Anthony Quinn, was of Mexican ancestry.⁸⁴ This was an aspect of the breadth of the coalition—the "Popular Front"—that had been built. Even the future governor, Edmund G. "Pat" Brown, worked alongside Communists in the National Lawyers Guild. "When I came to Los Angeles in 1943," said CP bulwark Ben Margolis, "he was an active member in the Guild. As a matter of fact, I worked very closely with him on the restrictive covenant issue" with Loren Miller.⁸⁵

But the relative inattention of both the CP and NAACP when it came to lambasting the outrages that befell Japanese-Americans was symptomatic of more telling societal trends—and internal weaknesses too.

In 1944, drawing inferences from the dissolution of the Communist International and the Tehran summit featuring, among others, FDR and Stalin, the idea took flight that the CP should itself become an amorphous political association, as opposed to a fighting nucleus of the working class, striving for political power. An inference of this metamorphosis was a softer approach toward the U.S. ruling elite, shedding light on the negligence in confronting the internment. Righting the ship led to the ouster of party leader Earl Browder, and internal turmoil leaving the CP unprepared for the postwar onslaught. One comrade felt that "if the CI [Comintern] had not been dissolved we would not have fallen into the revisionist pitfall."⁸⁶ This is not altogether on point in that the crisis was triggered by critical scrutiny coming from abroad—Paris, not Moscow—in that the respected French Communist Jacques Duclos was the man who sounded the alarm. Schneiderman was of the view that his analysis "created

82. Testimony of Emmet G. Lavery, 7-10 October 1946, 10-2 p.m., Vol. 28, Hearings, Box 30, D04165 93-04-12, CUAC Records.

83. Enrique M. Buelna, *Chicano Communists and the Struggle for Social Justice*, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2019, 17, 125.

84. Ben Margolis, Oral History.

85. Ben Margolis, Oral History.

86. Minutes, County Personnel Committee, 10 August 1945, Box 4, Kutnick Collection.

a deeper split in California than anywhere else," perhaps because of the devastating impact of dropping the ball on the internment, a sore thumb in the panoply of offenses that came be bracketed as "Browderism." This deep split was "particularly true in San Francisco," leading to chaos. Sam Darcy, one of the CP's most seasoned leaders and a California chieftain, was expelled in 1944 as an outgrowth of his opposition to Browder, a real loss—and not just because Dorothy Healey termed him "one of the best speakers I've ever heard in my life."⁸⁷

Future Smith Act defendant Oleta Yates was of the opinion that the comrades were "handicapped by the loss of many people who went into the armed forces," some of the most resolute among them. These were mostly men, which often thrust women into leadership roles, but as with fighting racism, there were weaknesses too in combating sexism. "I feel it is very difficult for a woman to be the top functionary in the Party on a full-time basis," she lamented; there was a "high degree of resentment against having a woman in this position," possibly an oblique reference to Dorothy Healey. As for Yates, she felt that she compensated by seeking to "develop some of my own sharpness as a defense mechanism against this resentment," which may have engendered other conflicts. But she had to "fight to establish... leadership as a man does not."⁸⁸

Walter Stack, who arrived in San Francisco in 1937, quickly becoming a union and CP leader, recalled with reservation that he too "adopted [the] Tehran line unreservedly"; echoing Yates, his self-criticism, referring to his "greatest weakness," was "being too aggressive and domineering which leads to [a] bureaucratic method of work."⁸⁹ Another comrade found that "criticism of leadership" was "taken as attack against leadership...you were classed as a Trotskyite."⁹⁰ The subsequently iconic feminist writer Tillie Olsen's "father was blacklisted in Omaha," compelling her to join the CP in 1931 in militant response; "on Tehran I never questioned the theoretical part of it."⁹¹ And she was hardly alone.

As if their pot of problems was not already overflowing, the CP chose this complicated moment to poke a stick in yet another hornet's nest. Nicky Rector, 28, had flaming red hair, was tall and thin and hailed originally from Oklahoma. Like many from the Dust Bowl, she made her way to California, then joined the CP, but by the Spring of 1946 was being interrogated about the "Homo problem" and she "denied" the accusations. But her interrogators found her "badly adjusted," supposedly reflected in her relationship with Mary Sherwood, 27, "blond, long braids, broad shoulders," a "homo, very dynamic, good mass

⁸⁷ Murdock, "Western American Communism." See also "Expose! Nazi 'Justice' in Sam Darcy Case," n.d., Box 33, Walton Phillips Collection.

⁸⁸ Minutes, County Personnel Committee, 24 August 1945, Box 4, Kutnick Collection.

⁸⁹ Minutes, County Personnel Committee, 3 September 1945, Box 4, Kutnick Collection.

⁹⁰ Minutes, County Personnel Committee, 3 September 1945, Box 4, Kutnick Collection.

⁹¹ Minutes, County Personnel Committee, 5 September 1945, Box 4, Kutnick Collection.

organizer but she thinks she is a hopeless homo." Though her "record is good for honesty and loyalty," it was well understood that "unless she becomes a normal [sic] person she cannot re-apply" after expulsion.⁹² Unfortunately, retained was a press clipping indicating that "some psychiatrists might tell patients 'secret crimes,'" ⁹³ presumably including violation of homophobic laws. "We do have a policy toward people who must visit psychiatrists," said the CP's National Review Commission. "*Gently but firmly*," they stressed, they handled cases like those of Rector and other "homosexuals and lesbians," grouped prejudicially with "drunkenness-promiscuity," along with "left sectarian" leanings and "white chauvinism." "In cases of lesbians and homos," it was said biasedly, "we found the works—personal and political degeneracy, drug addicts" and those "subject to every bohemian idea extant," not deemed to be a compliment. Pointing to external pressure, it was observed that "due to law recently enacted in California re: homosexuals...they have become the greatest liability in and around the Party (20 years in prison on act or failure to report and register as homo if practicing.)"⁹⁴

Also falling victim to the dragnet was Ramon Welch, suspected of "possible homosexuality"; he was residing at the UCLA campus in the late 1930s, where he was "associated with three persons known as homos," which led to a "three or four [hour] discussion on the question of homosexuality trying to justify it." He was said to be "aggressive in fondling men" and was "questionable" on the purported related praxis of "smoking marijuana." The verdict? "Expelled."⁹⁵

The party was also reacting badly to external pressure, not only in terms of tightened laws but intense scrutiny, for example, the Un-American Activities Committee of the state exploring the "Communist Party line in Sex," along with indelicate investigations of "pansies in pants" with vague references to "certain robust indiscretions in the decadent years of our great naval hero, John Paul Jones."⁹⁶

Apparently what was at play, at least in California, was a combination of the "right opportunism" of "Browderism," i.e., capitulation to the ruling elite as if the lamb could lie down easily beside the lion, and what one comrade termed the resultant dominance of a "left sectarian" faction, at least in San Francisco, which continued to exercise supervision over the Southland, a legacy from 19th-century settlement patterns. By 1948 it was reported that in the "past three years we conducted 300 hearings expelling 70 members for 'left sectarianism' and 10 'right opportunists,'" while two "stoop pigeons" were found to be "morally unfit." Thus,

92. Case File, 13 April 1947, Box 5, Kutnick Collection.

93. Undated clipping, Box 4, Kutnick Collection.

94. Report of National Review Commission, 25 December 1950, Box 4, Kutnick Collection.

95. Undated report, Box 5, Kutnick Collection.

96. *California Legislature Report of Joint Fact-Finding Committee on Un-American Activities*, Sacramento, 1947, 304, 323, 355, SFSU (abbrev. *California Legislature Report of Joint Fact-Finding*).

"during the past fifteen years the party in California has expelled" about "400 anti-party" elements; not added was how many of these expulsions swept within their ambit legitimate comrades.⁹⁷

What may have been described as "left sectarian" was a critique of the "Popular Front" approach that allowed both President Harry S. Truman and the CP alike to claim Thomas Jefferson as an ideological ancestor. (The training ground at the pinnacle for the CP, was the Jefferson School for Social Science in Manhattan,⁹⁸ despite his enslaving mania—not the ideal approach to appeal to Negro or even farsighted non-Negro workers). The critic was unsparing: "Why have American workers not yet developed the same degree of class consciousness and socialist perspective common [among] the workers in Europe and elsewhere?" Of course, as was the tendency, the Indigenous were unmentioned, nor was settler colonialism, wherein class collaboration inhered, which might have answered the provocative query. But, alas, the intractability of the inquiry is suggested by the point that as I write, this question—and even answers—still hang fire.⁹⁹

With the CP disoriented, it became even more difficult for the NAACP to gather its bearings. The CP's calling card was that it had a scientific outlook and wholly understood the machinations of capitalism; but the Browder episode, combined with the misstep on the internment, undermined its image and thus reinforced the plans of Walter White and his coterie. By September 1945, once again he was knocking on the door of the film industry, this time seeking to establish a staffed Hollywood Bureau and eager to recruit Langston Hughes, Lena Horne, music impresario John Hammond and Walter Wanger to the cause.¹⁰⁰ The well-compensated Negro jurist in Philadelphia, Raymond Pace Alexander, was on board, noticing that this was "one of the...greatest industries in America" and "does more...in creating public opinion and influencing attitudes" than others.¹⁰¹

But Alexander and White must have known that by venturing into Hollywood and seeking progressive allies, ineluctably they would be forced to rub shoulders with Communists who were in the vanguard of organizing the all-important screenwriters and their allies. Foremost among the latter was Paul Robeson, a frequent visitor to the Southland, befitting his stardom. In October 1946 he was dragged before the statewide Un-American Activities Committee. Yes, he last visited the Soviet Union in 1938. Yes, "I visited...Festus Coleman," Negro political prisoner, "once in San Quentin," a "miscarriage of justice" in his opinion.

97. Report, 1948, Box 4, Kutnick Collection.

98. Marvin Gettleman, "'No Varsity Teams': New York's Jefferson School of Social Science, 1943-1956," *Science & Society*, 66 (No. 3, Fall 2002): 336-359.

99. Letter to CLS, n.d., Box 2, Holland Roberts Papers, SFSU (abbrev. Holland Roberts Papers).

100. Walter White to Langston Hughes, 28 September 1945, Part II, Box A277, NAACP Papers-LC. In the same file, see also Minutes of 17 October 1945 meeting.

101. Raymond Pace Alexander to Walter White, 5 September 1945, Part II, Box A277, NAACP Papers-LC.

Yes, he knew Charlotta Bass, "one of the outstanding journalists of our people" and Revels Cayton too: "we are working together in [the National Negro Congress]." Then the star pivoted, recalling, "I was in London in 1933 at the beginning of the Hitler regime," and "my first concerts were to aid Jewish refugees who came from Germany to London." He denied being a card-carrying U.S. Communist. "I don't like to use the word artist," he sniffed, "I call myself a worker." And just like any other Negro worker, he too was turned away from a Fresno restaurant on Jim Crow grounds—"They don't like Armenians" either—indicating why he was often to be found on the frontlines of struggle.¹⁰²

Unavoidably, if the NAACP was to venture deeper into Hollywood, it would be awkward to ignore Robeson—but engaging with him would create manifold problems for them. For as the NAACP was considering this ambitious initiative, a trade publication reported "Local Commies start drive in the studio for members."¹⁰³ This nettle was grasped by 1948 when Thurgood Marshall was told of the positive attributes of John Howard Lawson, Communist screenwriter, who—unusually for the times—had enhanced the "dignity of the Negro character which was played by Rex Ingram" in *Sahara*, pushing the NAACP to support the embattled scribe. This was so since "among the definitions of 'Un-American Activities'" were "advocacy of the Geyer Anti-Poll Tax Bill and absolute racial equality," unveiling the ugly truth that anticommunism was deployed to derail antiracism.¹⁰⁴

Thurgood Marshall knew that movie executives were "scared to death" and thus, "Negroes and other minorities will now revert to the old line treatment."¹⁰⁵ Leslie Perry of the Washington Bureau "sat through most of the hearings," with Lawson as the spotlighted witness, and "not a single member of the Committee showed the slightest interest in fair characterization of Negroes"; it was "important to let [Robert] Kenny know," referring to the witnesses' counsel, "that we were interested in the civil rights of the subpoenaed" since "most of the writers involved have been conscious of their responsibility to handle Negro subjects with honesty and decency."¹⁰⁶

But Walter White disagreed vehemently, upbraiding "Dear Thurgood" when he sensed their group had filed a brief in the case of the "Hollywood Ten," of which Lawson was the "blacklisted" leader. "The brief has materially lessened the influence of the NAACP in Hollywood," he huffed; "we have enough issues of

102. Testimony of Paul Robeson, 7-10 October 1946, Vol. 28, Box 30, D04165 93-04-12, CUAC Records.

103. *Hollywood Reporter*, 21 January 1948.

104. Miss Perry to Thurgood Marshall, 22 December 1948, Part II, Box B73, NAACP Papers-LC.

105. Thurgood Marshall to Roy Wilkins, 30 October 1947, Part II, Box A274, NAACP Papers-LC.

106. Leslie Perry to Walter White, 11 November 1947, Part II, Box A274, NAACP Papers-LC.

free speech to fight without becoming involved in the very tangled Hollywood Ten case."¹⁰⁷

Black L.A. may have been better served if the Association had engaged with Robeson—and paid more attention to the growing community proliferating due south of the studios. Certainly Gov. Warren was made aware by early 1946 that “race tension” had “increased” there, garnished by “police brutality...[restrictive] covenants” and the like. The governor was also told that “Communitistic groups are again making inroads on the Negroes and are stirring them up.”¹⁰⁸ Pauli Murray, the queer Negro activist lawyer, was then in Sacramento and from that perch reached out to the governor, advising him that “many of us are extremely worried about the dangers of a race riot in Los Angeles” since “any spark can touch it off.” The kindling included “crowded housing” worsened by anxieties driven by “restrictive covenant court fights” and “job insecurity.” Modestly, she conceded, “I have some definite ideas on how a riot can be prevented,” so she wanted the governor to call her.¹⁰⁹

Murray also forwarded to the governor her recent experience in Sacramento where she witnessed an “enthusiastic audience” for a concert by Paul Robeson. “We smoked and talked,” she said of the hulking singer and activist, soon to be hounded. He “poured out some of the hurt he has suffered while in California”: while “driving up from Los Angeles, we were refused service twice...we didn’t know California was like this,” he said groaningly. But soon, he would be at the heart of an agonizing transition: As his homeland moved haltingly away from the more egregious aspects of Jim Crow, the price to be paid would be the enhanced assault on those like Robeson, the class-conscious antiracists and internationalists.¹¹⁰

Robeson had been refused service in the San Joaquin Valley, the agricultural heartland. It was in 1948 that Robert Brownscombe of Berkeley spotted signs there declaring, “No Colored Trade Wanted,”¹¹¹ contradicting the foundational idea that the lust for dollars overcame all.

Still, the U.S. had a difficult pirouette to execute, bashing the likes of Robeson, while seeking to weaken Jim Crow, so as to better preen and pose in the global arena in order to erode the growing influence of the socialist camp, the bitterest antagonist of imperialism. James Whitley of Los Angeles was displeased. “Negroes cannot ever be acceptable in intermarriage,” he spat out, whereas “all

107. Walter White to “Dear Thurgood,” 16 November 1949, Part II, Box B73, NAACP Papers-LC.

108. Helen MacGregor to Governor Warren, 21 January 1946, F3640: 3657, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

109. Pauli Murray to Helen MacGregor, 7 March 1946, F3640: 3657, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

110. Copy of Letter from Pauli Murray to Editor, 7 March 1946, F3640: 3657, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

111. Robert Brownscombe to Attorney General, 30 April 1948, F3640: 3657, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

other racial groups are 100% desirable...Negroes are 100% different." The remedy? "Repatriating them to Africa" and, minimally, to "keep Negroes from this state" as they "do not belong here."¹¹² He did not bother to wonder if the purported distinctiveness of Negroes may have had something to do with their being a sector of the body politic descended from a valuable commodity—the enslaved—expropriated without compensation.

Julia Toole of 11835 Willowbrook in L.A. County firmly told the governor of the "great injustice" she was enduring as the "Southern Negro crowded in" beginning in 1942 (it was now 1946); predictably, "Neighbors fled" and she demanded a government bailout to backstop her losses.¹¹³ "Three years ago," said W.L. Hopkins then of 3968 West 6th Street in L.A., "I was obliged to move from the house where I had lived for many years because of the influx [of] Negroes who were violating the racial restrictions which were contained in our deeds." But now it was 1947 and the "neighborhood is considered contaminated by white people" as the "dark tide is moving in" relentlessly.¹¹⁴

The "dark tide" was beaten back by a wave of suspected arson, a generally neglected topic in the historiography of the anti-Jim Crow movement. It was on 16 December 1945 at 5:30 p.m. that a fire erupted at the home of O'Day Short in Fontana, in San Bernardino County. Short, "his wife Helen, his son Barry and his daughter" all perished as a result of this "vigilante activity." They had moved eastward to escape the problem of finding housing in Los Angeles but instead encountered a "fire of great intensity" with searing "heat of 2000 degrees or over," said NAACP leader Thomas Griffith. Was "kerosene" the trigger—or was it all a gruesome accident?¹¹⁵ Not reassuring was what befell John T. Walker, Negro war veteran, whose unfinished home in Redwood City, south of San Francisco, was torched after he was threatened with death by dint of hanging on a fiery cross.¹¹⁶

Cynthia Copeland Rogalin of the Socialist Workers Party—oriented toward the platform of the late Soviet leader Leon Trotsky, and thus a mortal antagonist of the CP—agreed with the CP in her abhorrence of racist violence. Testifying before the state's Un-American Activities Committee, she berated the "long list of instances of burning of crosses at Los Angeles homes of Negro residents," and the "burning at Fontana of the Short family home," where, strangely, there had "not been one single arrest." Besides, there were "numerous viciously anti-Semitic threats to Rabbi Max Nussbaum, regional president of the American

112. James Whitley to Governor Warren, 8 January 1947, F3640: 3657, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

113. Julia Toole to Governor Warren, 27 February 1946, F3640: 3977, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

114. W.L. Hopkins to Governor Warren, 20 May 1947, F3640: 3977, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

115. Thomas Griffith to Honorable Jerome B. Kavanaugh, District Attorney, 4 April 1946, Part II, Box B131, NAACP Papers-LC.

116. Clipping, 14 September 1946, Part II, Box C17, NAACP Papers-LC.

Jewish Congress.” Then there was the “Big Bear-Lancaster area where a Negro actor, Ben Carter, was run out of town by a group of night-riding vigilantes.” Despite this reign of terror, she charged hotly that Mayor Bowron and the LAPD “collaborated with the Klan.”¹¹⁷

Even Edmund G. Brown, then district attorney of San Francisco—and future governor—was irate about the burgeoning bigotry; there had been a “terrific increase,” he said, including the implantation of a “cross on a synagogue.” A trigger seemed to be the spectacular growth of the Negro population: “before the war we had seven thousand and now there is approximately forty thousand.” He did not retreat from his own left-wing ties, often used to discredit: “I was the Vice President” of the National Lawyers Guild “last year” and retained his membership.¹¹⁸

The postwar push toward desegregation also impacted the men with the guns. Brigadier General C.D. O’Sullivan, the state’s adjutant general in late 1946, admitted to the governor, “As far as I know, there have been no National Guard colored units,” though “there have been colored State Guard units.” Said this premier military man, “These people”—referring to the “colored”—“are extremely sensitive and ready to take offense” at their exclusion.¹¹⁹ Indeed. Thomas Griffith, communicating from the NAACP branch office at 1108 East Vernon in Los Angeles, reminded the governor that “reactivating our State National Guard on a basis of racial segregation has created considerable discussion and some dissatisfaction.”¹²⁰

There was good reason for Negro leaders to stand firm. Contemporaneously, the Negro weekly, the *Pittsburgh Courier*, reported on a “wave of police brutality” then sweeping perilously through Black San Diego, a report of which found its way into Governor Warren’s files.¹²¹

Actually, it was worse than that in this naval bastion. That same year, 1947, a stunning case emerged of enslavement of Africans, as if this were 1847. A Euro-American couple in Coronado, San Diego County, were arrested after holding Dora Jones, a Negro, in slavery for three decades and, said a journalist, “beating her when she complained.” The female member of the couple was convicted for violating anti-slavery laws after 30 minutes of deliberation, while her partner in crime faced a hung jury, and they were forced to provide back pay.¹²²

117. Testimony of Cynthia Copeland Rogalin, 7-10 October 1946, Vol. 28, Box 30, D04165, 93-04-12, CUAC Records.

118. Testimony of Edmund G. Brown, Vol. 28, Box 30, D04165, 93-04-12, CUAC Records.

119. Brigadier General C.D. O’Sullivan to Governor Warren, 1 October 1946, F3640: 2845, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

120. Thomas Griffith to Governor Warren, 24 December 1946, F3640: 2845, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

121. *Pittsburgh Courier*, 29 March 1947, in F3640: 3657, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.

122. *Los Angeles Times*, 4 July 2022.

The revelations concerning death camps in Eastern Europe had done little to suppress a virulent anti-Jewish fervor, driven by hysteria about the profitability of Hollywood, the signature industry said to be dominated by Jewish-Americans. Days after being briefed about "race tension," the governor was subjected to a tirade about the supposed perfidy of the Conference of Studio Unions then striking the moguls and the purported tie to the Russian Revolution of 1917. "Hollywood," it was said, was "owned and controlled by the Jews," while it was alleged the leadership of the 59-strong Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party consisted of "3 Gentiles married to Jewesses" and "56 Jews."¹²³ Philip Brown of Long Beach brought the inflammation home when he informed the governor that "Jews control all the vital industries in Southern California...let's clean house and substitute for the old unjust 'Chinamen's Chance' an effective 'Jew's chance'" and "get back to vigilante days as soon as possible."¹²⁴

The inflamed Mr. Brown may have gotten wind of the National Negro Congress meeting in Long Beach at 1490 California Avenue. It was late May 1948 at 8:30 p.m. as 100 streamed into the gathering. The spy who was present said that the crowd was "all Negroes except 15 white people and some Jewish." Naturally, license plate designations were recorded, particularly since "some of the Negroes were from places other than Long Beach."¹²⁵

In other words, anti-Jewish bigotry continued to stain the state's escutcheon, a trait nourished at the highest levels. It was also in 1947 that the comrades of Progressive Citizens of America, the embryo of the third-party presidential race of Henry A. Wallace, former FDR Vice-President the following year, arrived at Gilmore Stadium, then west of Curson Avenue, surrounded by Beverly Boulevard, Fairfax Avenue and Third Street. A staggering 25,000 were present, but somehow amidst the mass, the authorized agent of the state was able to discern that "75% to 80%" were Jewish with only "200 or 300 Negroes, a few Japanese, Filipinos and the rest Gentile riff-raff." He was also sure that "no doubt, they were all registered Democrats." Dr. Linus Pauling spoke, but also NAACP leader Dr. H. Claude Hudson, whose presence was a "black swan" rarely showing up for such left-leaning events in coming years. Then, said this monitor, Dr. Hudson—"active in the left wing movement for some years"—sounded like CP leader Pettis Perry (although the latter was said to "speak like [he] just swung out of a coconut tree"). The inspired Hudson delivered "one of the finest Communistic rabble rousing speeches the writer has heard in a decade." Then attorney Robert Kenny, a former attorney general, spoke—a "mental monstrosity" was the label affixed to him—while star actor Katherine Hepburn in a "very appropriate" red gown wowed the crowd with remarks drafted by Dalton Trumbo. Charles Chaplin chipped in \$500.

123. Letter to Governor Warren, 19 January 1946, F3640: 3657, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.
124. Philip Brown to Governor Warren, 19 January 1947, F3640: 3657, Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA.
125. Report, 25 May 1948, F 2.13 1, NNC 93-04-12, D4158, CUAC Records.

and star actor and creative inventor Hedy Lamarr contributed similarly. A healthy \$31,000 was collected all told, which included the admission fee—though arguably it should have been more given the presence of affluent actors like John Garfield and Edward G. Robinson and the screenwriter Budd Schulberg, along with the philanthropist, Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jr.¹²⁶

A few days earlier, a May Day celebration received intense scrutiny. Again, as 1400 assembled at the Embassy Auditorium near downtown, an eagle-eyed observer was able to ascertain that those present included “85% Jews” along with “40 Negroes,” including “six Negro men entering with six women who looked to be of Jewish extraction.” This crowd assembled despite the 90 cents admission fee, hardly negligible. Dorothy Healey was cited for the proposition that there were then 5000 Reds in the county. The monitor was wholly unimpressed with Pettis Perry: “this big hunk of hock-meat who has nothing on a mule for size, strength, brains or smell.” Astonishingly, over 4000 new subscriptions to the Communist newspaper were announced.¹²⁷

Predictably, a Pauling biographer detected, that “nowhere did the anti-Communist fever rise faster or higher than in California,” the Southland notably, “where as early as 1947 Los Angeles officials ordered all Communist books removed from the county library.”¹²⁸ Why the Southland? Dialectically, the wealth generated via the studios, auto plants, rubber plants, aircraft factories and the like led to resistance to the gross profiteering involved, from which the CP was able to catapult into prominence.

An agent was also present when the American Youth for Democracy gathered at 1128 Shenandoah in the Pico-Robertson neighborhood. It was a Sunday evening in April 1948 and, it was said, “about 25 young men and a half dozen young women attended,” including “4 or 5 colored men” who were “clean, well dressed and good looking.” The main speaker, Ike Adams, was “Negro” and the “place was full of that futureistic [*sic*], Surrealist [*sic*] stuff”; the “girls were quite pretty (in a common sort of way) and they were very chummy and friendly with the colored boys,” viewed suspiciously, of course. The operative, “Quink,” insisted in closing “please keep this report very CONFIDENTIAL so that I can keep on playing around with these kids.”¹²⁹

Ongoing investigations of the statewide Un-American Activities Committee escalated, as their operatives continued to blow a shrill whistle alerting one and all to the continued strength of the CP, its internal messes aside. State Senator Jack Tenney, the wolfhound who passionately pursued Reds, chaired this body which concluded in 1947 that in L.A. County there were eight sections and 160 “active

126. Report, 19 May 1947, F 2.6, CUAC Records.

127. Report, 8 May 1947, F 1.2, CUAC Records.

128. Thomas Hager, *Force of Nature: The Life of Linus Pauling*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995, 312.

129. Report, 11 April 1948, F 2.6, CUAC Records.

clubs," exuding considerable strength. There was a training ground, the "Workers 'School" at 323 and 212 W. Third Street, and apparent influence at UCLA, given the numerous faculty there who were interrogated. There was an attempt to browbeat Robeson concerning Prague: "I knew [Edward] Benes; I knew [Jan] Masaryk very well because I sang there," referring to two leaders very much in the news during their nation's difficult transition to socialism. Cleophas Brown, described as a Negro "laborer," was grilled. He was leading the Richmond branch of the NAACP but, intriguingly, dodged deftly the revealing query if he believed in "God"—unusually for a non-CP leader—and then evaded the question about his own CP ties and his view of CP leader Archie Brown's race for governor.¹³⁰

While grilling real and imagined Communists, Senator Tenney took time to field correspondence from Burke, the Northrop executive, who pronounced himself "very happy" that the Fair Employment Practices Committee, fundamental to antiracism, was "meeting with defeat as I am sure," he confided, "this is not the opportune time to completely open the door to our enemies."¹³¹

Just before Brown's elliptical testimony was elicited, remarks of Sidney Davison in 1946 provided more reason for officialdom to fret. He lauded the "Peoples Educational Center" at 1717 North Vine in Hollywood: "Our semester is in its third week," he averred, "and registration, not a boom but neither is it too small," striking in light of the incipient Red Scare; "plans for the future look very good," and to that end, "real cooperation from the Hollywood craft union[s] is our major goal." Their ambitions were on a more "modest scale" than their peer organization in San Francisco, but the trend line was favorable.¹³²

Just as the City of Angels benefited from tidy sums donated from Hollywood, the educational efforts in the fogbound city benefited—said their leader, Holland Roberts—from "regular monthly checks in 3 figures" from Bill Crocker, an heir to the "dynastic empire," which could be credibly grouped alongside other piratical fortunes, including that of Stanford, Huntington, and Hopkins.¹³³ By the spring of 1946, Dr. Carleton Goodlett, the prominent Negro medic and friend of William Patterson, was part of the California Labor School, along with the rising writer Tillie Olsen.¹³⁴ Dr. Goodlett's presence was a sign of the CLS attempt to build a "full time training school for Negro union leadership"; by 1946 CLS claimed a "total of 275 Negro students in the school; 50 are veterans...in our full-time program; 150 are veterans in part time work."¹³⁵ The breadth of support for

130. *California Legislature Report of Joint Fact-Finding*, 35, 64-66, 304.

131. Edmund Burke to Senator Tenney, 1 February 1946, F 1.2, Location 93-04-12, D4L56 P1, CUAC Records.

132. Report from Sidney Davison, 12 February 1946, Box 2, Holland Roberts Papers.

133. Undated statement, Box 1, Holland Roberts Papers.

134. CLS Directory, Spring 1946, Box 2, Holland Roberts Papers.

135. Report, ca. 1945-1946, Box 2, Holland Roberts Papers.

CLS was exposed in late 1945 when they were informed that were slated to receive a "share of the proceeds of the Frank Sinatra short, *The House I Live In*," which was executed by the Fair Employment Practices Committee "at the request of the RKO Company,"¹³⁶ the studio soon to go belly-up. This was the halcyon era when Communist screenwriter John Howard Lawson could serve as "toastmaster" and present an award to Sinatra while Negro cineaste Carleton Moss was feted by studio head Dore Schary.¹³⁷ But those days were soon to disappear.

Moss's presence was all the more riveting since earlier he had been spotted—alongside Black Communist leader Ben Davis—at a Lenin Memorial meeting at the Shrine Auditorium, hard by the campus of the University of Southern California.¹³⁸ This annual memorial routinely attracted a bevy of spies with stereotyped views. Again, in 1948 at the Embassy Auditorium this time, the Lenin Memorial was described as "filled with Jews, colored people, some rugged looking individualists" and a host of "undercover investigators and plain clothes policemen." Warningly, it was stated bluntly, "anti-Jewish feeling is bound to spread among the Gentiles as long as huge Communist gatherings like this are made up [of] over 80% Jews...many Gentiles tell me that they suspect almost every Jew they meet of being a Red."¹³⁹ This perception, even if wrongheaded, led to the sweet and sour approach to what used to be called the Jewish Question: retreat in enforcing the more egregious aspects of anti-Jewish fervor, akin to the similar rhetorical retreat on the Jim Crow—while tightening the screws: the execution of the alleged atomic spies, Ethel and Julius Rosenberg.

Others were concerned with the presumed malign influence of Jewish-Americans on Negroes. This disturbing issue arose when the Board of Education in L.A. was investigating Sylvia Saltzman, the spouse of Finis Sims, Jr., described as a "Negro employed by the City of Los Angeles as a fireman," a rarity given their Jim Crow praxis. She was described as "Jewish" who married him in the summer of 1946; she was a member of American Youth for Democracy, though her date of joining was unclear. But "she recruited her husband...into this club in July 1946. Subject's husband was also a member of the Crispus Attucks Club of the Communist Party," and suspiciously, she subscribed to CP organs, while teaching at Jordan High School in a neighborhood in transition to a Black majority.¹⁴⁰

So endowed, by 1948 the California Labor School was "at its peak," it was reported proudly: "we had solid support from twelve key progressive unions" and "one hundred leading AFL, CIO and independent unions." Thus, their leader,

¹³⁶ Malcolm Ross, Executive Office of the President, Office for Emergency Management to CLS, 6 November 1945, Box 2, Holland Roberts Papers.
¹³⁷ Leaflet, 16 December ca. 1945, F 2.6 Location 93-04-12, CUAC Records.
¹³⁸ Report, 27 January 1946, F 1.2 Location 93-04-12 D4L56 P 1, CUAC Records.
¹³⁹ Report, 4 February 1948, F3, Location 93-04-12 D4159 P3, CUAC Records.
¹⁴⁰ Report, 1 December 1949, F 2.6 Location 93-04-12, CUAC Records.

Holland Roberts, denied the charge that CLS "was dominated" by the CP—though certainly it was involved intimately. The FBI begged to differ, and in pursuit of their contention "tailing" students and teachers was common, or "someone thought to be a progressive thinker...for days or weeks, even months or years."¹⁴¹

Soon an offensive was launched on CLS, CIO unions, the CP and all those associated with them, on spurious grounds of anticommunism but actual grounds of repressing an ascending foe to the left, thereby assuring a weakened challenge to the U.S. ruling class.

For as late as 1949 official Sacramento had reason to believe that there were now—as a right-wing rag put it—"272 Commie cells in L.A.,"¹⁴² apparently more than had been present just a few years earlier. Mayor Bowron, who presided at City Hall from 1938 to 1953, likely was believed when he argued that the CP had a "stronghold" in his town, "second only to New York City" (others would have said surpassing Gotham). His analysis may have been why he was invited by U.S. military leaders to what was described as a "hush-hush" confab in Washington, as if now local Reds would be interned if the U.S. had to wage war on Communists worldwide.¹⁴³

Again, as late as June 1949, state agents continued to bird-dog suspected Communists, now including the Labor Youth League, an affiliate of the CP. Senator Tenney was told that their subversiveness was demonstrated since they sought to "promote the intermingling of the white and black children. This outfit is the real thing," not an ersatz version. For they were passing out "circulars" at the "Progressive Bookstore," deemed to be "Commie," sited on "West 7th Street, as well as along the Central Avenue district," thick with Negroes.¹⁴⁴ Once more, these authorities seemed obsessed with determining who was Jewish. Weeks earlier, a LYL meeting at the Embassy Auditorium featured Leon Wofsy—later an esteemed professor of immunology at Berkeley—described as carrying a crown of "kinky dark hair" and a "very pronounced hook nose."¹⁴⁵

This apparent growth in the ranks was remarkable given the adversities: a proliferating Red Scare, the still fresh memory of the blunder of failing to confront the internment, purges on often specious grounds, etc. Sterner stuff would be needed in order to thoroughly repress not only the Communist Party but all those who leaned leftward.

141. Undated statement, Box 1, Holland Roberts Papers.

142. *Los Angeles Herald*, 3 October 1949, F 1.2 Location 93-04-12 D4L56 P1, CUAC Records.

143. *Los Angeles Herald & Express*, 28 October 1948, F 1.2, CUAC Records.

144. "Tom" to "Jack," 18 June 1949, F 2.131, CUAC Records.

145. Report, 1 April 1949, Labor Youth League, F2.404, Box 10, D04159 93-04-12, CUAC Records.

Chapter 4

Communists on Trial, 1945-1952

By 1951, Southland Communists were on trial in federal court by dint of the Smith Act, entailing a conspiracy to advocate and teach the overthrow of the U.S. government by violent means. The comrades cited voluminous chapter and verse to show that their activities consisted of rallying, organizing, educating, agitating—but this was not accepted by the jury, nor the judge, and a guilty verdict was rendered in 1952, disrupting the CP. So weakened, the CP was poised to abandon—if not share—center stage on the pro-socialism front, with the BPP by the 1960s. For simultaneous with this weakening was a halting step to erode the polecat status of the Negro and, likewise, corrode a form of anti-Jewish bigotry, both of which served to boost the fortunes of both groups, making it less necessary—it was thought—for either to opt for radicalism.

That Los Angeles was the epicenter of this counter-offensive should not be surprising for it was the first city in the state and among the first in the nation to pass a local Communist registration ordinance.¹

Taking a cue, after the 1951 round-up of the CP leadership, the state launched a devastating offensive. As one report indicated, “FBI visits to progressives were increased many fold” as “hundreds if not thousands of Party members and progressives” were “visited” and, assumedly, intimidated. This led to and fed “promotion of factional activity” which accomplished the intended goal: “throwing suspicion upon certain comrades” fueled by “spreading rumors.” This was “causing collisions with police” propelled by “planting frame up documents centering around personal life.” The comrade who pointed all this out also found that this contributed to “too much petty bourgeois liberalism in the Party.” Besides, about half of the original 22 defendants “had wives who were known to be hostile” to the cause, while “2 were single or unattached.”²

The pivotal year, 1951, also witnessed the publication of a hyperbolic report by the statewide Un-American Activities Committee, which argued that “until approximately the twenty second day of June 1941”—the day of Berlin’s invasion of the Soviet Union, when the CP launched an overdrive antifascism effort—CP

1. Bernstein, “Building Bridges,” 11.

2. Report, December 1952, Box 4, Kutnick Collection.

"specialists conducted a school on underground Communist activities" near Orinda. They hinted that "machine guns and grenades" were there, accompanied by "espionage activities in Alameda County" that led to the atomic bomb capo, J. Robert Oppenheimer.³ Smith Act defendant Rudolph Lambert, who had spearheaded the purge of queer comrades,⁴ was also implicated in the Oppenheimer controversy.⁵ Still, it would be an error to place these purges solely at the door of Lambert; there was broad support internally for it.⁶

What happened to defendant Dorothy Ray Healey—referred to derisively as the "Red Queen" by her detractors⁷—was indicative. By November 1962 she was before the Subversive Activities Control Board, brought into being precisely to sledgehammer the Communist Party, and was teed up for even more punishment. Her attorney, John Abt, was apoplectic, reminding one and all that the "proceedings against Mrs. Healey and the...similar proceedings [are] completely without precedent in America, or, indeed in Anglo-Saxon and judicial history," not as far-fetched as it sounds and, in fact, inexorable given the stakes and the balance of forces. He recounted how she was indicted in 1951 and "held on hundred thousand dollars bail; she spent four months in prison," then was "tried; she was convicted."

But by 1957 the U.S. Supreme Court reversed this decision, and the U.S. Attorney moved to dismiss all charges—and then sought to compel her to "confess what the United States Attorney stated in open court, that the Government was unable to prove against her,"⁸ that she was in fact a conspirator to overthrow the regime by force. Being behind bars was "degrading," "dehumanizing" and "debasing" she lamented, with sympathetic "Black officers" present being hardly compensating. Support for the embattled defendants was also seen in the fact that as they were jailed in their fight for bail, comrades delivered twice a day scrumptious meals, meaning gaining weight. Perhaps the added pounds provided enhanced energy for debate, for example, on the question, Was there really a fascist danger (a notion that was to animate the BPP a few decades later, which could have benefited from more awareness of this earlier argumentation)? Those who scoffed at this idea pointed to their open, not shuttered bookstores and the incipency of a surging Negro movement.⁹

3. "Sixth Report of the Senate Fact-Finding Committee on Un-American Activities," 1951, SFSU.

4. See Minutes of National Review Commission, 25 December 1950, Box 4, Kutnick Collection.

5. John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr, Venona: Decoding Soviet Espionage in America, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999, 72, 232, 324.

6. See List of Expellees Nationally, n.d., "Sherwood, Bob (Reed)...male supremacy, white chauvinism...preoccupation with homosexuality." Box 4, Kutnick Collection.

7. *Fortnight*, 31 March 1952, Box 1, Schneiderman Trial Records.

8. *Dorothy Ray Healey v. SACB*, 7 November 1962, Part I, Reel 25, Records of the Subversive Activities Control Board, 1950-1972, NARA-College Park, Md. (abbrev. Subversive Activities Control Board Records).

9. Dorothy Healey, Oral History.

By the time the defendants were able to escape the maw of prosecution, the CP was a shadow of its former self, opening the door for alternatives to their brand of socialism. Enter the BPP.

The CP and BPP also intersected on a road Abt did not note. For it was on 28 August 1956, as Communists continued to reel spasmodically, that the FBI first formally designated what came to be known as COINTELPRO, directed against the CP¹⁰—but ultimately and violently ensnaring the BPP. This illustrates the wider point that these dual challenges to the status quo were taken quite seriously. The bludgeoning of both raises searching questions about the actuality of civil liberties.

Healey, the so-called “Red Queen,” had been a top leader, alongside Schneiderman, whom Oakland’s Jessica Mitford viewed as “tremendously sharp, noted for his cutting repartee”—which could slice in different directions. As she saw it, he was part of the San Francisco party leadership, distinguished not only from that of the Southland but even the East Bay. For those from the hilly city “tended to move in a rather elite circle,” whereas in Oakland the circle of comrades was “made up largely of workers, many of them Blacks.”¹¹

* * *

A principal defendant at the 1951 Smith Act trial was Ben Dobbs. As a youth, he attracted audiences by performing skits on the back of a flatbed truck, then was stationed in Czechoslovakia during World War II.¹² Like a number of other CP leaders, his parents were of Russian Jewish heritage and, like the father of attorney Ben Margolis, his dad too was a painter. Dobbs the elder had been part of the Conference of Studio Unions, craft workers who mightily struck Hollywood in 1945 and then, in a manner that mimicked what befell the CP in 1951, were locked out—subjected to a kind of mass firing—by 1946, sending this pillar of the CP into a doom loop too. The weakening of unions was devastating for Negroes, providing them, as was said, with a newfound right to check into a hotel but lacking the wherewithal to pay the bill. The Jewish community, on the other hand, could be more easily integrated into hegemonic “whiteness” and more readily assume posts as attorneys, doctors, accountants and even the ruling class.

In any case, Dobbs’ parents—like Margolis’s—were not overly religious but leaned toward secularism. As Dobbs the defendant saw it, “the fact was that most of the party in L.A. at that time was Jewish,” speaking of the pre-trial lineup. Also

10. Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall, eds., *The COINTELPRO Papers: Documents from the FBI’s Secret Wars Against Dissent in the U.S.*, Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 2022, 33.

11. Mitford, *Fine Old Conflict*, 95, 101, 105, 111, 114.

12. Healey Eulogizing Dobbs, April 1993, Box 21B, Dorothy Healey Papers, CSU Long Beach.

in the dock were CP allies in the CIO, but the AFL, he said, "with all due respect, was at least ten times bigger than the CIO ever was in this area. This city was and is an AFL town," was his considered opinion in 1987. Anyway, he continued, "the case of the L.A. 21," as the case was dubbed, "lasted...roughly about a year and a half. But it was one of those one-sided attacks that cost a lot of money and we had to have lawyers, etc. But we still functioned because...we were only in jail for relatively short periods of time: thirteen days, eight days, five days, two days." But top leader Dorothy Healey was "picked up," detained in 1949, disrupting activism. This set the stage for massive purges, as disrupters poisoned internal channels. Ultimately, three of the defendants, including Dobbs, Healey and journalist Al Richmond, departed the ranks in the aftermath of the latter's critical memoir of internal party doings exacerbated by the 1968 Soviet intervention in Prague.¹³

Of these three, she was the key figure, accused by the local yellow press of "crack[ing] the whip over 4000 Communists and perhaps thousands more undercover Reds," encompassed in "175 clubs," with "30 members in each club" minimally¹⁴—this in the prelude to the trial. Healey contended that by 1948 there were 5000 Communists in the county and by 1949, 50,000 statewide. Yet the bulk of the membership was beyond San Francisco, though the leadership was sited there disproportionately, leading to efforts to address this imbalance post-trial.¹⁵ Still, by 1952, a right-wing rag boasted that there had been 60,000 Communists in 1948 but well below 40,000 then.¹⁶

Another defendant, Henry Steinberg, received 39,707 votes for the school board in L.A. in 1951, though this was a decline from 1949, when he received 5420 more votes¹⁷—good news embedded in bad news, a barometer of the times. Yet, it was Steinberg, said Dorothy Healey, who was "instrumental" in the election to the L.A. City Council in 1949 of a Chicano, Edward R. Roybal, a breakthrough for Mexican-American representation.¹⁸

In the prelude to the 1951 trial, the anticommunists were on the offensive. By early 1948, the courts upheld an anticommunist loyalty oath for county workers.¹⁹ By 1949 the city fired seven workers in a loyalty oath purge, sufficient to cow and intimidate the remaining work force.²⁰ The purged included not only CP members

13. Ben Dobbs, Oral History.

14. *Los Angeles Mirror*, 22 August 1950.

15. Dorothy Healey, Oral History.

16. *Fornight*, 15 March 1952, Box 1, Schneiderman Trial Records.

17. *Daily Worker*, 15 April 1951.

18. Dorothy Healey, Oral History.

19. *Los Angeles Times*, 10 January 1948, Box 14, Civil Rights Congress Papers, Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research, Los Angeles (abbrev. CRC Papers).

20. *Los Angeles Times*, 7 January 1949, Box 14, CRC Papers. See also "Ray Garner v. Board of Public Workers of Los Angeles and Board of Civil Commissioners, Appeal from Superior Court of Los Angeles County," ca. 1949, Box 470, Norman Leonard Papers.

but those with ties to their youth affiliate, the Anti-Nazi League, the Abraham Lincoln Brigade (U.S. nationals who had fought for the Republic during the Spanish Civil War of the 1930s), and the National Committee to Abolish the Poll Tax.²¹

It should be kept firmly in mind that the Red Scare was more than just assaulting the CP. It helped to shape the entire political climate inescapably, forcing virtually everyone to the right, including liberals. From Washington, as early as 1947, a report surfaced that excoriated Mayor Bowron, accused of having "supported Spanish loyalists," i.e., the left; and along with Helen Gahagan Douglas, an associate of Walter White and an actor/politician, she was listed as an "opportunist." The actor John Garfield was denoted as a "fellow traveler," not a compliment. Rex Ingram, the Negro actor, whose becoming role in *Sahara* was crafted by Red scribe John Howard Lawson, was listed as a CP member, as was left-liberal writer/intellectual Carey McWilliams. As for Edward G. Robinson, the well-heeled thespian, this supposed fellow traveler "holds Communist meetings in a converted garage on his property." Orson Welles? Fellow traveler was the verdict. Writer Dashiell Hammett, "probably" a Red. Hollywood union leader, Herb Sorrell? Red as blood was the judgment—a flawed analysis but no less corrosive.²²

The anticommunist mastiffs were hot on the trail of Robinson. Earlier, the Chief Counsel of the Washington-based House Un-American Activities Committee was told by an associate how he had "attended a Communist meeting in Los Angeles" that was "presided over by Olivia de Havilland," yet another fellow traveling actor, and, of course, "Edward G. Robinson"—who was not only a "picture star" but also "has every Jew in the country back of him."²³

The radical left fought back, as 1948 witnessed what a scholar termed an "incredible" \$46,000 raised in one evening for the infant, left-leaning Independent Progressive Party. According to Healey, during "California primaries in June about a half million people cast ballots for candidates who had filed or cross-filed as Progressives, one-fifth of the total primary vote." By 1948, according to one count, the city contained a population of Mexican origin of 450,000; 258,000 Jewish Americans; and 225,000 Negroes—a field ripe for growth. Yet, also dialectically, cell—or club—meetings were not conducted in Spanish, nor were translations of printed materials allowed. Scholar Enrique Buelna asserts that the differences between CP groups out West versus back East made them "appear to be wholly distinct organizations," complicating forging a national strategy. Back to the Southland, Buelna adds that there was conflict between second-generation

21. Undated document, Box 14, CRC Papers.

22. Memorandum, 13 May 1947, Record Group 233, Box 949, Part IV, HUAC Records.

23. Charles Peyton to Ernie Adamson, 3 December 1945, HUAC Records.

Mexican-Americans and those who held a "strong identification with their Mexican heritage," further complicating fightback.²⁴

Bill Schneiderman, yet another defendant, chose to defend himself—à la Angela Davis two decades later—and was an eyewitness as a new legal star was born. Leo Branton went on to defend Davis adeptly, then the Panthers. But he had received his baptism in fire in 1951 as the CP's affirmative action policy mandated the inclusion of a Negro attorney (just as future congressman George Crockett was included in the paramount Smith Act trial in 1949 in Manhattan). "It was against Leo Branton...that [Judge William] Mathes showed his most blatant bias. He repeatedly mispronounced his name,"²⁵ said a defendant. Mathes was "short, squat, broad faced but sharp featured," said defendant Richmond, though a mature 53-year-old veteran of judicial warfare.²⁶ The judge was "smooth" and "urbane," but "vicious" in his rulings and also in dealing with the sole Negro counsel, according to Healey.²⁷

Actually, it was worse than she could have imagined. He allotted, it was said, "generous praise" of scurrilously anticommunist reporting of his derring-do.²⁸ He bucked up Judge Edward Dimock in Manhattan, who was throwing the book at Communists in a trial in Manhattan: "your offer to permit the defendants to go to Russia has received much favorable comment in our local press," he said cheerily.²⁹ Judge Dimock was elated when the Southland jurist provided "memoranda upon denial of the defendants' motion for acquittal and the defendants' motion to strike," which was of "incalculable value to me"; he was "very fortunate" in being able to consult him and the notorious Judge Harold Medina, the primary persecutor of Communist leaders reaching back to the infamous trial of 1949 that eventuated in the imprisonment of defendants and attorney Crockett alike.³⁰

It was Judge Medina, quite damagingly, who set the pace for pulverizing Communists in the courtroom. For the earlier 1940s case involving Schneiderman, defense attorney Wendell Wilkie averred that the defendant had not advocated present destruction of the government insofar as there was no overt act of violence. Judge Medina specifically instructed the jury that this case had no application.³¹

24. Buelna, *Chicano Communists*, 98, 139, 119, 34.

25. Schneiderman, *Dissent on Trial*, 148. On Crockett, see Horne, *Black Liberation/Red Scare*, passim.

26. Richmond, *Long View*, 315.

27. Dorothy Healey, Oral History.

28. Letter from Judge Mathes, 29 December 1952, Box 1, Schneiderman Trial Records.

29. Judge Mathes to Judge Dimock, 10 February 1953, Box 1, Schneiderman Trial Records.

30. Judge Dimock to Judge Mathes, 28 August 1952, Box 1, Schneiderman Trial Records. See also Horne, *Black Liberation/Red Scare*.

31. *Fortnight*, 18 February 1952, Box 1, Schneiderman Trial Records.

"In keeping with our telephone conversation," Judge Mathes shipped Judge Dimock "instructions to the jury," which also proved invaluable.³² At this juncture, the U.S. Supreme Court, which included Justices William O. Douglas and Justice Hugo Black, were seen as perilously woolly-headed in confronting Reds. Thus, Dimock appreciated Mathes's counsel, since he was "likely to run into the same sort of thing" encountered by his Southland peer. The "attitude of the Supreme Court," he said with aspersions, "seemed to me to represent the unrealism of an ivory tower...if we must presume defendants' innocence for the purpose of fixing bail, how can we hold them at all?" Indeed.³³

This matter of bail, amounting to jail without trial, was a pressing matter for the CP. As 1951 was expiring, a rally took place at what is now MacArthur Park; 150 were present as John Howard Lawson chaired. He introduced "Frank Alexander," who spoke on behalf of the CP. "In [L.A.] we have fifteen people in jail without bail," he cried, "for \$50, 000 is no bail for a workingman who makes \$50.00 or \$60.00 a week."³⁴

In the courtroom division of labor, it was Branton who served as counsel for defendants Healey, Dobbs, Henry Steinberg, Lambert, and Philip Marshall Connelly.³⁵ Altogether there were, by February 1952, 15 defendants represented by six attorneys, as the CP was slated for decapitation.³⁶

Branton may have paid a price because of the unyielding defense of Communists in Manhattan by his fellow Negro counsel, Crockett, who quite infamously was jailed after the trial along with those he defended. Yet the L.A. attorneys relied on this Detroit's impassioned appeal to the jury, 50 pages double-spaced on legal-sized pages, where he announced, "We are proud of Ben Davis. We are proud of Henry Winston,"³⁷ speaking of the two Negro CP leaders. Still, Norman Leonard, counsel for the L.A. trial, says his team was determined to avoid the perceived errors of the New York trial, where the clients determined virtually every aspect of the trial. But the guilty verdict was the same in both instances, not least because despite the prating about force and violence, the exhibits were not guns and bombs but, he said, "books, books, books. Books were being tried." Perhaps that was why a woman juror was "weeping" profusely as the verdict was read.³⁸

32. Judge Mathes to Judge Dimock, 8 August 1952, Box 1, Schneiderman Trial Records.

33. Judge Dimock to Judge Mathes, 18 September 1952, Box 1, Schneiderman Trial Records.

34. Report, September 1951, Part I: CPUSA, Reel 27, Subversive Activities Control Board Records.

35. Notice of Appeal, *USA v. Schneiderman, et al.*, 29 November 1951, Record Group 21, Box 1297, Records of the District Court of the U.S. for the Southern District of California Central Division, 1929-1938, Criminal Case 21883, NARA-Riverside (abbrev. Smith Act Trial Record). In this collection, see also Transcript, 6 February 1952, in Box 1337.

36. *Fortnight*, 18 February 1952, Box 1, Schneiderman Trial Records.

37. Crockett Summation, 11 October 1949, Box 363, Norman Leonard Papers.

38. Norman Leonard, Oral History.

Defendant Healey also spotted jurors "crying" after their lengthy deliberations. The defendants themselves should have been boo-hooing when the trial culminated in August 1952, as the accused faced the looming prospect of five-year sentences and thousands of dollars in fines.³⁹ Tellingly, it was the victory on appeal in the U.S. Supreme Court, in the case of *Yates v. USA* coming from the October term in 1957, that rescued the comrades but left a fallback position for the ruling class insofar as the opinion included language that the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution protected radical speech—unless it presented a "clear and present danger."⁴⁰ This suggests that a routing of the comrades could be launched again if it appeared that they were coming closer to gaining mass influence.

Another counsel in this 1951-1952 case, Norman Leonard, could barely muster the tepid endorsement of the judge—"not too bad; not too good either."⁴¹ But decades later he termed him "smart" and "no dummy," though he considered his clients a "danger to the republic," hailed from Jim Crow Texas and was close to Tom Clark, yet another Texan who served on the U.S. Supreme Court.⁴²

The judge may have received a copy of the file kept on Branton, which indicated that he was a subscriber to Communist publications as early as October 1950 from his address at 1111 E. Vernon in L.A. Helpfully, included were pictures of subscribers.⁴³ Even as the trial was unwinding in late 1951, Branton was listed in the Communist press as "emerging as a new champion of the Negro people."⁴⁴ During the trial, Branton blurted out, "I was accused of being a Communist at the NAACP meeting."⁴⁵ His brother Wiley Branton subsequently was listed as attorney for the Negro students who desegregated Central High School in Little Rock and then was scheduled to address the left-leaning National Lawyers Guild.⁴⁶

Margolis concurred with the view that Branton was administered withering treatment, while blaming in part malfasant press coverage, which, he said, highlighted every supposed misstep of the defense, while underlining "direct testimony" that did not place Communists in a positive light. This "awfulness" from the standpoint of the public was printed. Not a word about the cross-examination. And this happened not just once, but time after time; it was a rarity when there would be [a] word in the press about anything that the defendants did that was favorable to them...there [was] a group of about, oh, I think, twelve or fifteen newspaper reporters who sat all through the trial.... they would tell us, 'we

39. Dorothy Healey, Oral History.

40. *Yates v. USA*, October Term 1957, Box 1, Schneiderman Trial Records.

41. Norman Leonard to "Dear Richie," Gladstein, 28 April 1949, Box 362, Norman Leonard Papers.

42. Norman Leonard, Oral History.

43. List of Subscribers, 1950, F3, Location 93-04-12 D4159 P 3, CUAC Records.

44. *Daily People's World*, 26 November 1951, Carton 17, People's World Research Files, SFSU (abbrev. PW Research Files).

45. Transcript, 24 April 1952, Box 1341, Smith Act Trial Record.

46. *People's World*, 5 October 1957, Carton 17, PW Research Files.

wrote the story. We wrote everything that happened. We don't decide what's published. 'They said, 'The city desk did that. 'And they'd be apologetic about what was happening. It wasn't just an occasional thing. It was a day-in-and-day-out-thing.' "[Judge] Mathes was a racist," he said. "He was from the South. He tried very hard to conceal it and most of the time was not overtly a racist but I think when other counsel stood up and argued with him, he was able to take it better than when Leo Branton stood up and argued with him."⁴⁷

Schneiderman came in for his share of criticism too, the resultant anxiety perhaps fomenting the serious nosebleeds he suffered during the trial.⁴⁸ Said Margolis, "he was, during the trial, quite severely criticized by other defendants, on the grounds that he didn't adequately play the kind of independent role that he should have. He didn't make the kind of presentations that he should have. And he wasn't really a strong guy," a terrible weakness for a leader of the working class, and "did not play a strong role during the trial."

The attorneys too were damaged by this trial. Margolis found that the "income of the office probably dropped by maybe 75 percent...and the number of people dropped by 60 percent or two-thirds perhaps. The office was having a tough time. For a number of years we lost money. We got into debt." Other well-paying clients, like Hollywood screenwriters Lawson and Trumbo, wound up in prison too, though, per Margolis, "the pictures that Dalton Trumbo wrote, that Lester Cole wrote, Albert Maltz wrote"—criminal defendants all—"virtually all made money and lots of money." Lawson particularly was ill-prepared for this moment since he "gave away...so much of his money" in true Communist style. But the studios, especially Warner Brothers, were petrified, he said: "they were very much afraid of anti-Semitism spreading during this terrible period, and...they felt that they had to be holier than holy." So "they went along. They did not initiate." Those like the actor Sterling Hayden had "joined the Communist Party," but like many independent contractors, "he was pretty much of a loner" and "wasn't that heavily involved" and, as with others, his donations faded to a trickle.

There were other so-called allies, for instance, the American Civil Liberties Union in San Francisco. "If they wrote a brief in favor of the Communist Party, it was a fifty page brief. Forty-nine pages would be an attack on the Communist Party, and then the fiftieth page would say, 'But nevertheless, reluctantly we have to say that they're entitled to the protection of the First Amendment. 'And even here in Los Angeles," he continued, "where it was much better than San Francisco, you'd have, for example, the attorney for the ACLU standing up and saying 'I want to make it clear that I'm not a Communist. I don't agree with them but'"—not necessarily a winning argument with a jury or a judge for that matter.

47. Ben Margolis, Oral History.

48. Transcript, 15 April 1952, Box 1341, Smith Act Trial Record.

"Now...they wouldn't carry it to the lengths that—I'm really not exaggerating what they did in San Francisco, except instead of forty-nine pages in fifty, it might be twenty pages and five pages," he said laughingly.

Then there were alleged comrades, like Dave Brown, a mainstay of the stalwart Civil Rights Congress. "He developed a drinking problem. Was doing a lot of drinking...he was originally a bona fide member and official of the [CRC], totally devoted to its cause. And he, like many other people on the left, was approached by the FBI and asked to cooperate with them: to give them names and activities and so forth...eventually his need for money in order to meet his need for alcohol caused him to...give in." There were "hundreds" of informers in the CP, though their dues money contributed to keeping the organization afloat.

Riddled with informants and battered by the FBI, Lawyers Guild "membership dropped down to the very, very few. I think in Los Angeles...we may have five or ten active members, maybe fifty, sixty who paid their dues," down sharply from the thousands. "It dropped way down. It was trouble to keep it alive," meaning less defense for targeted radicals.

During the Smith Act trial, "each of the attorneys got, I think, \$10,000 total," and this "lack of money was also a problem."⁴⁹ Branton, for example, was at the threshold of a bright career and was bound to be influenced by this "lack of money." Still, Margolis found that during the trial the "most brilliant argument" was made by this youthful advocate, born in Jim Crow Pine Bluff, Arkansas, in 1922. It was Branton who with eloquence "spoke about the relationship of the Communist Party to Blacks, and who talked about the things that the Communist Party had done for the...Black people. And he would say... 'This is what they did. Who else was willing to do that? And that's why we're in court here today.' He made a brilliant argument," which the NAACP chose to ignore to the detriment of its constituency.

But a few years later, the political climate began to change with the ferocious reaction to the vicious slaying *cum* lynching of Black teenager, Emmett Till in Mississippi in 1955, and the energy displayed during the Montgomery Bus Boycott, delivering Dr. King and Rosa Parks to the national spotlight. This contributed to reversals in the highest court of anticommunist decisions. As Margolis put it, "the government came in and asked for a dismissal as to everyone on the grounds that they couldn't meet the standards that the Supreme Court had set. And what followed, of course, then, was the dismissal of all of the other Smith Act conspiracy cases. There were five or six pending at the time," stretching from coast to coast." Margolis's father was a Socialist, and with the dismissal—arriving contemporaneously with the 1956 revelations about the misdeeds of Soviet leader Josef Stalin, which destabilized the CP and their comrades globally—this

49. Ben Margolis, Oral History.

hardworking attorney departed the ranks of the CP as well.⁵⁰ This was a real loss: Even one of his staunchest critics called him an "effective speaker and a good showman" (the same detractor called Schneiderman a "slight, mild intellectual," not exactly typecast as a rip-roaring leader of the proletariat.)⁵¹

Before he departed, Margolis also sought to woo Charles Hamilton Houston, the primary architect of the NAACP juridical attack on Jim Crow. Unfortunately, the rapidly balding Washington litigator expired prematurely as the L.A. case was ignited. Yet exuding good faith, Houston previously had defended Dalton Trumbo, contrary to the approach of White and Wilkins, and demonstrating why the Association's Legal Defense Fund may have breathed a sigh of relief when it was forced to split from the larger organization. On the other hand, the fellow Lawyers Guild member and former state attorney general, Robert Kenny, was considered but, said Margolis, he "is not a fighter," a sine qua non for such a case.⁵²

Of course, Margolis himself was held in "high regard" by the defendants, said Healey. During this different time, the comrades could afford to be picky in choosing counsels for, as Healey indicated, they were "inundated" in 1951 by "requests" from attorneys to defend them, possibly because the massive publicity could bring renown and/or more paying clients. Yet, she realized that this inundation too distinguished the Southland from the rest of the nation, though at least one of these eager advocates lost clients as a result of his defense of them.⁵³ Still, despite the high praise for Margolis, he was ousted by mutual agreement as counsel for Schneiderman—"it is not a matter of finance" was the consensus at trial in February 1952—and he chose to represent himself.⁵⁴

As with Angela Davis two decades later, Schneiderman representing himself—the conviction aside—may have helped the overall defense. "[I was] brought here from Russia when I was about two years old," he said, then detailed how GOP presidential hopeful Wendell Wilkie was so taken by his effort to prevent denaturalization that he took on his case pro bono, leading to a stunning victory insofar as it was ruled out of bounds for CP membership to lead to loss of citizenship. He also sought to rebuke the idea that the dusty tomes of Marx and

50. Ben Margolis, Oral History.

51. *Fortnight*, 18 February 1952, Box 1, Schneiderman Trial Records.

52. Ben Margolis to Richard Gladstein, 6 October 1948, Box 362, Norman Leonard Papers: He was "pleased and surprised by [Houston's] quick grasp of the case" and "understanding of the basic political issues involved...he wanted to tell the jury...that he is a Negro that he understood that Dalton Trumbo in this case was in the same position as he had been in all his life; that he did not work nights because if he did and a white prostitute should come into the office and shout 'rape' that he would be all but finished...this was what was happening to people alleged to be Communists." Reference to Scottsboro aside, Houston, he said, was "becoming so enamored of 'gimmicks'" to flummox the prosecution; he "knows the rules of evidence thoroughly" but "his argument to the jury had practically no political content" though "in the Trumbo case, we had a Negro lawyer and seven Negro jurors,"

53. Dorothy Healey, Oral History.

54. Transcript, 1 February 1952, Box 1337, Smith Act Trial Record.

Lenin, trotted out by the prosecution as biblical commands or scriptures or catechisms implemented robotically, were anything more than guides to action. Thus, there was "heated debate" at statewide party conventions and concurrence that, in any case, socialism would arrive "by the free will of the majority," not from a gun-toting minority.⁵⁵ Witness David Saunders testified that with the Browder controversy, the comrades were "convulsed," in that "very heated discussion" promptly ensued.⁵⁶ "Immediate reconstitution" of the CP was seen by the prosecution as suspect.⁵⁷ Still, the prosecution opted to spend considerable time discussing the book by Josef Stalin, *Foundations of Leninism*.⁵⁸

What was on trial in part was the defendants' worldview. Defendant Mary Bernadette Doyle hailed from an English Catholic founder, descended from founder Charles Carroll of Maryland—and had attended a convent. But, like Schneiderman, she freely admitted that she was influenced by the anthropological classic of Engels, *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State* (recall that this writer had lent this book two decades later to an imprisoned militant.)⁵⁹ She suffered more than most during the trial: "She feels very badly," said attorney Margolis in April 1952; it was the "strain of court" that led to her "heart attack.... a stroke or heart attack" worsened by "high blood pressure." Said Doyle, "I feel terribly dizzy today and have for about three weeks." Her severance from the trial was granted.⁶⁰

Kenny's absence was even more unfortunate since the former top law enforcement officer in Sacramento would have brought gravitas to the courtroom. This could potentially have been significant, given the public interest in the case. Even a right-wing organ detected "great public interest" in the case with "huge crowds seeking admittance."⁶¹ "Lines stretching" at length to enter the courtroom were part of the landscape; the courtroom was "never empty," said Healey, which was also "unusual" compared to other Smith Act trials.⁶² Crowds did not appear magically but because their presence was generated by the CRC and the allied

55. Transcript, 6 February 1952, Box 1337, Smith Act Trial Record. The importance of the 1943 case involving Schneiderman was relied on heavily by the defense but, alas, times had changed: See *Schneiderman v. USA*, 21 June 1943, Box 1319, Smith Act Trial Record. In Box 1321, see Carol King. "The Schneiderman Case," New York: American Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Born, 1943: This advocate said this case was a "landmark in the development of American constitutional history."

56. Transcript, 7 February 1952, Box 1337, Smith Act Trial Record.

57. Transcript, 29 February 1952, Box 1339, Smith Act Trial Record.

58. Transcript, 19 February 1952, Box 1338, Smith Act Trial Record.

59. Transcript, 6 February 1952, Box 1337, Smith Act Trial Record.

60. Transcript, 21, 23, and 24 April 1952, Box 1341, Smith Act Trial Record.

61. Article in *Formight*, "California's Own News Magazine," 18 February 1952, Box 1, Schneiderman Trial Records.

62. Dorothy Healey, Oral History.

California Emergency Defense Committee (CEDC) with offices at 307 South Hill Street in downtown L.A. and 935 Market Street in San Francisco.⁶³

Militants with the CEDC were essential in executing what Healey termed as the "mammoth" job involving almost two dozen individuals of producing daily multiple copies of the lengthy courtroom transcript.⁶⁴ But despite their best efforts, it was left to attorney Margolis to object in February 1952 when there were "empty seats in the courtroom," while in the "roped off section" there were those "writing for certain publications" who were "bitter enemies of the defendants," including the notorious "Norman Jacoby of 'The Alert.'"⁶⁵

The Lawyers Guild was also essential to this process. Charles Garry would soon attain renown as the chief attorney for the BPP, but in 1952, in his capacity as a leader of the San Francisco chapter of the NLG, joined William Esterman of the L.A. Guild and spoke on behalf of "California chapters" in assaying that the "case now being tried" in L.A. was "extremely important." They maintained a "copy of the daily transcript" for perusal, which could be viewed in Garry's office at 68 Post Street, while Branton served on the Executive Board of the L.A. chapter.⁶⁶ The eminent left-wing trial attorney Norman Leonard described him as "bright, brilliant and terribly able,"⁶⁷ so doubtlessly he contributed immeasurably to the defense. Assuredly, Branton may have raised eyebrows among his opponents when he displayed in court an utter fluency with the often recondite intricacies of Marxism-Leninism.⁶⁸

Even Loren Miller, in full retreat from his prior left-wing connections, signed a brief in support of the defendants in 1952.⁶⁹ Another prominent Black professional, Dr. Price Cobbs of San Francisco, weighed in, objecting to hearings of the Washington-based House Committee on Un-American Activities scheduled for L.A. as the Smith Act trial was unfolding.⁷⁰

Suggestive of how the intended knockout punch from the right-wing had not landed altogether was the presence of a 400-car peace caravan touring L.A. organized by the "Peace Crusade" in 1951 as the war on the Korean peninsula amounted to a meat grinder. (Dean Matthews, a Negro minister, won second prize for most inspirational float.)⁷¹

63. Newsletter, 20 June 1952, Box 1, Schneiderman Trial Records.

64. Dorothy Healey, Oral History.

65. Transcript, 20 February 1952, Box 1338, Smith Act Trial Record.

66. Statement from Garry and Esterman, 4 March 1952, Box 1, Schneiderman Trial Records.

67. Norman Leonard, Oral History.

68. Transcript, 20 February 1952, Box 1338, Smith Act Trial Record.

69. Amicus Brief, 15 July 1952, Box 1, Schneiderman Trial Records.

70. Letter, 19 May 1952, Record Group 233, Box 949, Part IV, HUAC Records.

71. *Daily Worker*, 17 May 1951.

Inevitably, the message was then broadcast that the Lawyers Guild was dominated by Communists, suggesting that of 150 members in L.A. by 1948, 15 were Reds.⁷²

This beehive of activism around the trial was generated substantially by the CEDC, more specifically their leader Iris Noble. It was she who reprimanded the press coverage of the *Los Angeles Times* generally as an attempt to "inflame...jurors" by running a series by the infamous infiltrator of the CP, Herbert Philbrick.⁷³ This inflammation caused defense counsel to engage in voir dire in order to detect the impact on jurors, thus lengthening a trial that consumed about nine months all told. (One juror claimed that, yes, he was biased against Communists but, yes, he could disregard his thinking and rule fairly.)⁷⁴

* * *

Keeping a lid on Black protest while blocking Black ties to Reds was not easy, the NAACP's capitulation aside. This serves to explain why Branton was targeted during the trial in the curious absence of top-level Black defendants. As previous chapters suggest, officialdom at once was deeply concerned about Communist influence among Negroes given the atrocities routinely inflicted on them, yet hesitant—if not reluctant—to take on the powerful forces who were behind this deathly process. Because of the influence of West Coast longshore, which did not shun Communists, a number of Negroes had gained influence in this union. This was facilitated by the aforementioned California Labor School and its Southland peer. It was not only the stevedores that included Negro membership but also Local 44 of the Marine Cooks and Stewards, and they all reared up vigorously against the Red Scare.⁷⁵

In response, the surveillance dragnet took careful note of an announcement found in L.A.'s "Progressive Bookshop": "Attention! Negro trade union members...you can win absolutely free...two weeks 'vacation on the Monterey Peninsula—all expenses paid." There was a California Labor School summer camp at Asilomar near Carmel where "Jim Crow and discrimination are forbidden," a real attraction in the tarnished Golden State. All applicants had to do was write an essay on why your union can bar discrimination—"spelling or grammar does not count" was a tad patronizing admonition. Judges included the Patterson comrade, Dr. Carleton Goodlett.⁷⁶ This announcement was part of a

72. *Los Angeles Times Herald*, 25 January 1952.

73. Iris Noble to Norman Chandler, 16 January 1952, Box 1, Schneiderman Trial Records.

74. Transcript, 1 February 1952, Box 1337, Smith Act Trial Record.

75. Report, 4 October 1946, F2. 26 Location D4156 PE, CUAC Records.

76. Leaflet, 20 May 1949, F2. 26 Location D4156 PE, CUAC Records.

thick file on the CLS that included references to Robeson appearances in Berkeley, notably at 605 Woodmont Avenue, and canceled checks allowing insight into its ample funding.⁷⁷ The L.A. equivalent was at 212 West Third Street.⁷⁸

The very existence of Robeson, a man of prominence who refused to bolt from the Red orbit, was akin to red flag to the bull for the anticommunist hawks. They were overjoyed when he was attacked by baseball star Jackie Robinson, the UCLA alumnus, in 1949, and kept close tabs on his doings.⁷⁹

Among the Negro stevedores drawn to the CP was Roscoe Proctor. Born in Groesbeck, Texas, he grew up in Dallas. He was a Boy Scout and captain of the football and track teams at Lincoln High School and president of the Senior Class. Rejected for service during World War II because of a football injury, he moved to California in 1941, toiling on the docks in Long Beach, San Pedro and Wilmington as a member of Local 13 of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, before heading northward to the Bay Area, where he was active in Local 6 and then the CP.⁸⁰ If the *Washington Post* is to be believed, by 1949 he was one of 1400 Black Communists in the U.S.⁸¹ (Arising at the Smith Act trial was an examination of the CP pamphlet, "Why Negroes are Joining the Communist Party.")⁸² In a different climate, Proctor would have been courted by the NAACP. Instead, Franklin Williams of the NAACP in California asserted that "one of my great concerns" was not the Dixiecrat influence in Washington nor the grip of colonialism on Africa but the "extent and degree of Communist influence in our waterfront and other unions" since "Negroes constitute a large proportion of these unions."⁸³

Thus, as an important civil rights conference loomed in Washington, a Golden Stater announced, "I understand the problem of keeping the conference free of Communists"; but Walter White also received a hint as to why the two major population centers—L.A. and the Bay Area—were so difficult to ensnare in the newly asserted anticommunist consensus: "because of distance and other factors few Californians or other Far Westerners have attended of the kind scheduled for February [1952] in Washington."⁸⁴

The logic of distance did not push the influential Black union leader C.L. Dellums to a more farsighted view. He worked alongside the veteran anticommunist A. Philip Randolph in the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and

77. California Labor School File, 1940s, F2.26, CUAC Records.

78. Undated reference, Box 1326, Smith Act Trial Record.

79. File on Robinson and Robeson, ca. 1949, RG 233, Box 1045, HUAC Records.

80. Document at 15th Biennial Convention of ILWU, ca. 1950, Box 130, *Norman Leonard Papers*.

81. *Washington Post*, 14 July 1949.

82. Transcript, 21 February 1952, Box 1338, Smith Act Trial Record.

83. Franklin Williams to Charles Abar, National Maritime Union-San Francisco, 17 December 1951, Carton 3, NAACP Papers-UCB.

84. Letter to Walter White, 31 December 1951, Carton 2, NAACP Papers-UCB.

was the uncle of future congressman Ronald V. Dellums, a friend of the BPP. But then the elder Dellums was "cautioning against involvement with questionable organizations, especially the Communists and Civil Rights Congress."⁸⁵

Undaunted, the San Francisco office of the NAACP launched what amounted to a holy crusade—not against stubbornly lingering Jim Crow but against the Communist Party. "Keep your eyes wide open" was the message then: "Don't get sucked in! These groups and organizations and publications are attempting to mislead the Negro Community." Who, pray tell? The "California Labor School. Civil Rights Congress...People's World...Political Affairs [CP journal]." Unctuously it was added, "distributed as a public service by the West Coast Regional Office...NAACP [San Francisco]."⁸⁶ Making it plain, this office announced in an open meeting that the NAACP "does not welcome members" of the CP.⁸⁷

Ultimately, NAACP hatchet man Franklin Williams, rewarded with an ambassadorship to Ghana in the 1960s, as the Pan-Africanist regime of Kwame Nkrumah was being undermined, tuned up for this critical assignment by hunting Reds in California. As the Smith Act trial was unwinding, Williams assured that "everything" was "being done" to limit "Communist and front organizations," and he remained "confident we can control it."⁸⁸ He was "gravely disturbed by reports that left wing groups are attempting to infiltrate" the Association. With utter sobriety he told Emory Robinson of L.A. that quite simply these alleged subversives were not "permitted to participate," for that would be the "kiss of death" otherwise.⁸⁹

The NAACP desperately was seeking to mainstream equality and felt that any hint of a tie with Reds would be destructive to that goal. The problem, evidently unrecognized, was that there was a powerful bloc opposed to equality, and the Association needed all the help it could muster. Surrendering to that same bloc was destructive in the long run. Still, there was a reason why the Association kept materials on a devastating "Fourteen Week Series" on the purported evil of Communists: There was "no greater menace...ever faced [in] our modern world," was the message from KNBC, the television station in L.A. then massaging the consciousness of millions through the newfangled household appliance then installed in countless homes.⁹⁰

As noted, the NAACP was loath to ally with Reds on the bedrock matter of Hollywood, Communist contributions to positive Negro images on the silver screen notwithstanding. But what to do when the "John Brown Communist Club"

85. Conference of Northern California NAACP, 25 May 1951, Carton 99, NAACP-UCB.

86. Undated leaflet, Carton 3, NAACP Papers-UCB.

87. Franklin Williams to Branches, n.d., Carton 3, NAACP Papers-UCB.

88. Franklin Williams to Walter White, 16 February 1952, Carton 71, NAACP Papers-UCB.

89. Franklin Williams to Emory Robinson, 16 February 1952, Carton 71, NAACP Papers-UCB.

90. Material on KNBC, 4 April 1952, Carton 71, NAACP-UCB.

picketed theaters in the Fillmore District of San Francisco for their abject refusal to hire Negroes? Stores were targeted for the same reason, and the Association felt they could hardly sit idly by, while others thought that linking hands with Reds was the overriding issue. Over time, the latter prevailed easily, and the united antiracism cause suffered.⁹¹

Given balking in "liberal" San Francisco, it is easy to envision even more resistance in the military outpost of San Diego. For when it appeared that the CP and NAACP were about to launch a "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" campaign, an observer found that the "whole character of the struggle was changed by the introduction of these charges of Communism" and its alleged "sinister and subversive" influence, generating a "hysterical" reaction.⁹² This campaign included picketing the Safeway grocery until they hired Negroes at their Logan Heights store.⁹³

William M. Foard, a former clerk at Allegheny Ludlum Steel, left the CP in 1948. At the trial it was brought out that in September 1946 he transferred to the Fillmore/Negro Club from that of the ILWU. As Branton put it in cross-examining him, the idea was "to get the Uptown Theatre to hire Negroes" and to compel "National Dollar stores" to do the same, along with Woolworth's—the latter not yielding generally until the early 1960s. But, said Branton triumphantly, "for the first time in the Fillmore," these retailers were forced into retreat.⁹⁴

This was standard for the border city. Appearing at the Smith Act trial was Lloyd Norman Hamlin of 6366 Newcomb Street, a photographer who joined the CP in 1945 (and thus had reason to be a shutterbug, an aboveground gatherer of intelligence). He was a frequent visitor to the party bookstore, then at 7th and E streets, and rose to become chairman of the club—cell—of professionals. Yet indicative of the perils that comrades faced in San Diego, he not only spied for the FBI but, forbiddingly, "Naval Intelligence" as well.⁹⁵ He was in the navy when he arrived in town in 1942 and an intelligence officer even then, and—double trouble—had worked with the FBI in El Paso before that.⁹⁶ Hamlin received a whopping \$250 monthly from the latter agency, along with a disability payment of \$60 monthly from the navy, incentivizing him to snap photos in comrades' homes and picnics and public meetings and turn them over to these agencies.⁹⁷ (The FBI was prone to deploy photographers and those familiar with using sound

91. N.W. Griffin, Regional Secretary to Walter White, 8 November 1946, Carton 71, NAACP Papers-UCB.

92. "Intergroup Relations in San Diego: A Report to the City Council and the Board of Education...", from American Council on Relations, 1946, Carton 92, NAACP Papers-UCB.

93. Transcript, 19 February 1952, Box 1338, Smith Act Trial Record.

94. Transcript, 3 April 1952, Box 1340, Smith Act Trial Record.

95. Transcript, 15 February 1952, Box 1338, Smith Act Trial Record. CP offices were sited at 4th and F streets: See Transcript, 18 February 1952, Box 1338.

96. Transcript, 19 February 1952, Box 1338, Smith Act Trial Record.

97. Transcript, 20 February 1952, Box 1338, Smith Act Trial Record.

equipment—bugging—as informants. One of these men turned over to the FBI about 300 CP pamphlets and books and leaflets, along with “letters to party members.”⁹⁸

“Our principal concern was the Independent Progressive Party” campaign of 1948, led by former FDR Veep, Henry A. Wallace; “all of us were working very hard,”⁹⁹ said Hamlin. Presumably he was not one of the angry assemblage who destroyed circulars from the Wallace campaign in L.A. in 1948. Anger was a descriptor that also could be applied to LAPD plug-uglies who were known to batter suspected Reds without prompting. A telling indicator arrived on 18 November 1952 as a reflection of the battering it had absorbed: The newspaper of the CP on the West Coast, which had, said Margolis, been “issued in the large standard sized editions,” was shrunk to “small or tabloid size,”¹⁰⁰ a resonant and symbolic shrinkage.

Daniel Scarletto of Eagle Rock, 2327 La Verne Avenue in Los Angeles, joined the CP during the summer of 1947—and reported promptly to the FBI. His club—cell—was in Lincoln Heights: “I belonged to the Mexican concentration club.” He attended a training school for novice comrades at “Western near Santa Monica Boulevard,” and testified about encountering defendant Steinberg at the “Jewish Culture Building in City Terrace...about 22 people there.” During those very different days, KLAC-TV broadcast a 1951 CP election rally from 8:05-8:20 p.m. (prime time), where Steinberg and Healey spoke.¹⁰¹ Scarletto also had ties to one of the more effective so-called “Communist fronts,” the International Workers Order, a fraternal benefits and insurance group with a membership roll of 165,000.¹⁰²

Like other stoolpigeons, Scarletto had a navy background, serving from 1942 to 1945. Born in 1920, he arrived in the Southland in 1938. He was contacted by the FBI in 1946 and received \$20 a month to spy—then was bumped up to \$75. In seeking to discredit him, Margolis grilled him on his personal relationship, suggesting he was in violation of federal law by residing intimately with a woman to whom he was not wed and traveling across state lines in the process.¹⁰³ A woman with whom he was consorting, squealed on him; he, in turn, solicited funding from neighbors and then squealed to the FBI about it; this helped to fill out the succession of written reports he submitted routinely.¹⁰⁴ Still, this two-timing approach may have compromised him among his moralistic supporters: A

98. Transcript, 2 May 1952, Box 1342, Smith Act Trial Record.

99. Transcript, 21 February 1952, Box 1338, Smith Act Trial Record.

100. Transcript, 12 March 1952, Box 1339, Smith Act Trial Record.

101. Transcript, 7 March 1952, Box 1339, Smith Act Trial Record.

102. Transcript, 12 March 1952, Box 1339, Smith Act Trial Record. See also Robert Zecker, *A Road to Peace and Freedom: The International Workers Order and the Struggle for Economic Justice and Civil Rights*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2018.

103. Transcript, 11 March 1952, Box 1339, Smith Act Trial Record.

104. Transcript, 12 March 1952, Box 1339, Smith Act Trial Record.

right-wing analyst scorned him as "less than 100% effective" as a witness since he "could not remember dates" and was trapped in "vague" and "embarrassing contradictions." Worse, it was thought, he "denied" Margolis's explosive accusations, though he was "forced to admit that he was not married to the girl [sic] he had previously said was his wife." He displayed "immaturity in his vehement and belligerent statements," touched to the quick by Margolis's insistent probing, which pushed him toward a damaging misidentification, pointing to a "completely innocent bystander in the rear of the [court]room to inquire if he was not present at a certain party meeting," as "laughter...greeted his efforts."¹⁰⁵

However questionable Margolis's line of questioning was it was exceeded by a stoolpigeon who recruited family members to the CP—then ratted them out to the FBI. Honolulu was this agent's next stop in this disreputable tour.¹⁰⁶

Prosecution witness John Lautner joined the CP in 1929 at the age of 27. Born in Hungary, he served during World War II. "I am a graduate of military intelligence," he boasted, which held him in good stead during his stints in Detroit and Yorkville-Manhattan, when he served in the potent "Control Commission" of the CP, which—inter alia—had oversight of discipline and expulsions. The Comintern posted him to Canada by 1931, then to Cleveland and West Virginia. His wage as cadre was about \$50 per month—and a car. He bolted from the CP in January 1950 but was a presence before then at party plenums in Manhattan, where he helped to preside over even more expulsions—before he himself was expelled.¹⁰⁷ Then, as was the pattern, he became a compensated witness in other trials, including when he was grilled by attorney Vito Marcantonio of New York, as Lautner recalled with bitterness his difficulties under Communist rule in Hungary for three months in 1919.¹⁰⁸

Lautner had been trained in psychological warfare by the U.S. He testified that he was "stationed first...in Algiers," then Italy, then Hungary, as that nation was transitioning to the socialist path. He also testified that the underground system he encountered in anti-Nazi Europe was adapted by CPUSA post-war. There was also testimony that Healey possessed paper that "could not be traced through the chemical imprint" for sensitive communication and other measures—an underground system of communication, that is—designed to circumvent a state of affairs when the comrades might be barred from buying paper. Defense attorneys at one point suggested it would be unlawful for the CP to "own paper."¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ *Fortnight*, 31 March 1952, Box 1, Schneiderman Trial Records.

¹⁰⁶ Transcript, 29 February 1952, Box 1339, Smith Act Trial Record.

¹⁰⁷ Transcript, 26 February 1952, Box 1338, Smith Act Trial Record.

¹⁰⁸ "Trial Information Bulletin," No. 5, 4 March 1952, Box 41, Identifier 38995426, "Screened for Exempted Material," Record Group 118, Records of U.S. Attorneys, Central Judicial District of California...Selected Criminal Case Files, 1952-1991, NARA-Riverside (abbrev. Screened Files).

¹⁰⁹ Transcript, 3 March 1952, Box 1339, Smith Act Trial Record.

Such a draconian maneuver would have been consistent with Lautner's past praxis, which he related on the witness stand with what was described as a "slight accent" and "wry smile."¹¹⁰ The CEDC defense team argued that he was "once closely associated with the ruthless Imperial White Guards of his native Hungary and Rumania," but then went too far in associating him with the "treacherous counter-revolutionary cronies of Marshall Tito" in then existent Yugoslavia,¹¹¹ whose reputation among comrades rose dramatically in coming years.

Later, Healey was to complain bitterly about what she saw as CP sectarianism before her departure from the ranks in the 1970s. But back then she was on board with her sharp criticism of Anna Louise Strong, viewed otherwise as a friend of Moscow and China,¹¹² akin to the scolding of Tito.

This espionage-scented sectarianism also drove instability within the NAACP but, presumably, the idea was that this was not too high a price to pay.¹¹³ This provided an opening for a standpat leader of the American Federation of Labor to poke his nose into NAACP internal affairs in L.A.: James Anderson argued vociferously that Thomas Griffith, the Association leader there for almost 15 years by 1949, was "harboring Communists," while the latter contended that "Communists have as much right to hold office in the [NAACP]" as any;¹¹⁴ but this civil libertarian viewpoint was falling victim to potent imperatives.

Other than Black ties to Reds, there was the related concern of Negroes' outreach to global allies, the too often shrouded weapon of the anti-Jim Crow movement which the CP could arrange. Note was taken by Governor Warren himself when the Black attorney Hugh MacBeth, one of the few not of Japanese extraction who objected stridently to the internment, who with Monroe Kidd, a fellow Angeleno, headed to Mexico, Cuba, Africa and Brazil to confer on "race relations."¹¹⁵ Similarly, Washington was quick to seek the deportation of hundreds of Indonesian seamen, whose presence was seen as inimical to the interests of the colonizing Dutch ally as independence loomed, as if a cordon sanitaire of a sort were built around the fragile U.S.¹¹⁶

* * *

110. *Fortnight*, 15 March 1952, Box 1, Schneiderman Trial Records.

111. Newsletter of CEDC, 19 March 1952, Schneiderman Trial Records.

112. Transcript, 7 March 1952, Box 1339, Smith Act Trial Record.

113. Leon Steward to NAACP Board, 16 July 1947, Carton 82, NAACP Papers-UCB. This concerns the "dismissal" of the branch leader in L.A.

114. *Afro-American*, 1 January 1949.

115. Appointment Secretary of MacBeth to Governor Warren, 13 July 1944, F3640: 3656, Governor Earl Warren Papers.

116. File on Indonesian Seamen, 1946, Box 424, Norman Leonard Papers.

Thomas Griffin, longtime leader of the L.A. branch of the NAACP, paid attention to the Un-American Activities Committee and "questioned" their anticommunism, but given the dimensions and magnitude of what was at play he was hardly up to the task at hand.¹¹⁷ On the other hand, in the midst of the Smith Act trial, national NAACP leader Herbert Hill issued a damaging pamphlet: "The Communist Party—Enemy of Negro Equality." The entire first printing of 5000 was sold out, with unions in the middle of anticommunist battles—the National Maritime Union and the United Auto Workers—purchasing 1800 and 500 copies respectively.¹¹⁸ With the wind in their sails, the Greater Alameda County CIO Industrial Council based in Oakland attacked the CP with stinging vim.¹¹⁹ This was brutal payback after the CP had helped to build the CIO in the first instance. In 1941, L.A., for example, was viewed as an "open shop town," not pro-union, but, said a CP reporter, "in a little more than a year and a half CIO membership has jumped from 25,000 to 70,000 or more,"¹²⁰ with that journalist's comrades leading the way in organizing.

Hence, in the prelude to the trial—setbacks aside: ill-considered purges, an awkward stumble on the Japanese internment issue—it was understandable why the Party was slotted for extinction. And alternatively, the NAACP, at least to begin with, was not flourishing as a direct result. In 1949, the 63rd Assembly District of the CP in the Southland signed an "open letter" which, inter alia, lamented the "drop in membership" of the NAACP.¹²¹

This initiative emerged at the behest of the elder Frank Alexander, described as a "Negro Communist leader...one of eight persons jailed for refusing to talk before a federal grand jury." The "Jim Crowed jail" was no prize: "Negroes, Mexican Americans and whites all have separate sections," par for the course. It was "way back in 1918 that Alexander first learned about organization and unity" in Sioux City, "where he met Mother Bloor," the legendary organizer. This "led him to Spain where he fought [alongside] the Republicans for two years," then a "two year stretch as a staff sergeant in the South Pacific during World War II," then back to California and his "wife and two small children"—and joining his "brother Hursel Alexander" as a touted Communist.¹²²

By this point, the Alexander family—in some ways the "First Family" of Black Communism in the Southland, if not nationally—was playing an increasingly prominent role. The Alexander family patriarch was born enslaved.

117. Thomas Griffin to Walter White, 1 November 1946, Carton 1, NAACP Papers-UCB.

118. Herbert Hill to Franklin Williams, 10 December 1951, Carton 3, NAACP Papers-UCB.

119. Statement, ca. 1952, Carton 71, NAACP Papers-UCB.

120. *People's World*, 1 May 1941.

121. *California Eagle*, 3 February 1949, F 2.400, Box 10, D04159, 93-04-12, CUAC Records.

122. *Daily People's World*, 8 November 1948.

It was an Alexander who, as a carpenter, was a member of the union and the first Negro ever elected a delegate to the Los Angeles Building Trades Council.¹²³

Hursel [Herschel] Alexander was monitored by the authorities in Washington: "I joined the YCL [Young Communist League] in 1937 when I was eighteen. My first real work was in an unemployed strike in Sioux City. I was a member of the Strike Committee. [Later] I was a Vice President of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butchers" and "joined the CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps] camp in California," and from there he became "President of the South Side Branch of the League and a member of the Los Angeles County Bureau" of the CP, an organization he was said to have joined in 1936. He also served on the Central Committee of the Independent Progressive Party, led titularly by former U.S. Vice President Henry A. Wallace. At one juncture he was listed as a "self-employed shoemaker" residing at 2222 Juliet Street in Los Angeles.¹²⁴ According to the British-born Communist Jessica Mitford, Hursel Alexander was typical of the clan, a "terrific charmer and a prodigious worker"; he led the local Civil Rights Congress, headed nationally by William Patterson.

The NAACP stood on the sidelines as the CRC—driven into liquidation by the state by 1956—led a determined struggle against police misconduct, the failure to address same laying the groundwork for the ascension of the BPP. The CRC's focus on the frameup of Jerry Newson not only caused a whirlwind of activism in Oakland leading to a sale of 10,000 copies of a pamphlet on his ordeal but attracted and inspired the dedicated attention of Huey P. Newton. Ironically, repressing the CRC and its CP ally led to the rise of Newton and his BPP.¹²⁵

Franklin Delano Alexander was born in 1941 in Chicago. His father, Charles Alexander, was born in Eastpoint, Ga., in 1908, and his mother, Naomi Taylor Sturges, was born in Diasburg, Tenn., in 1906. He was given credit for recruiting Angela Davis to the CP.¹²⁶ Charlene Mitchell, part of this family, led the defense of Angela Davis, and before that ran for president on the CP ticket in 1968. Yet, there is little gainsaying that the 1951 trial was harmful, the advances of the Alexanders aside.

* * *

123. Undated booklet, "Two Decades of Progress," re: CP in L.A., 1919-1939, Box 58, Dorothy Healey Papers, CSU Long Beach.

124. Report on Hursel Alexander, unclear date, Investigative Name Series #1, Series #1, 9E, HUAC Records.

125. Mitford, *Fine Old Conflict*, 101, 111, 114.

126. Investigative Name Series #5, Box 1.72-75 9E 3-17-3, Record Group 233, HUAC Records.

When the Smith Act trial opened in late 1951, the defendants presented a mixed bag. Healey was receiving \$50 weekly but endured migraines,¹²⁷ doubtlessly worsened by the tension delivered by her employment. She was paid in cash, as were her co-defendants, Communist cadre all, including Mary Bernadette Doyle (\$47 weekly); Loretta Stack, employed by Ahrens Bakery in San Francisco at the rate of \$45 weekly. Editor of the West Coast CP periodical *People's World*, Al Richmond, got \$45 weekly, while his spouse received a queenly \$70 weekly as an employee of the firm led by left-wing lawyer Richard Gladstein.¹²⁸

Richmond had served with this journal since about 1938—excepting the three years he spent in the U.S. military. He was born in London but was naturalized. Peripatetic, up to 1938 he had journeyed to Japan, China, Russia, Germany, France—and Poland from 1921 to 1922.¹²⁹

The bulky Philip Marshal Connelly, dubbed ironically as “Slim,” was the L.A. editor of the *Daily People's World* and he too had a salary of \$50 weekly. He had been Secretary-Treasurer of the L.A. CIO (Congress of Industrial Organizations) Council for 11 years, first president of the statewide CIO, and second president of the local chapter of the Newspaper Guild from 1937 to 1938. He endured extreme high blood pressure, requiring injections every other day, along with a chronic thyroid condition.¹³⁰ Defendant Oleta Yates had to deal with a painful case of bursitis.¹³¹

“For years,” said Healey, “[Connelly] had been the top rewrite man of the old [L.A.] ‘Herald-Express’” and thus became “one of the first organizers of the Newspaper Guild.” The corpulent journalist “was always a very controversial character, on the one hand because of his politics—because he was a Communist—and on the other because of [unnamed] personal eccentricities, which came more from his occupation than anything else.” Or it may have been his religious background.

She was in a position to know since they had married in 1949. She too was impressed with Branton, though this had been his first “major case.”¹³²

Connelly and Richmond were journalists on trial, but Philip Bath, a photographer for the *Los Angeles Times*, was a witness against them. Bath had plied his trade at the local CP headquarters, snapping photos (an aboveground intelligence gatherer)—then came to the courtroom where he spotted Frank Edward Alexander of 4322 Lockwood Avenue in L.A., which led to his being

127. *Dorothy R. Healey v. James Boyle, U.S. Marshal, Habeas Corpus*. RG 21, Records of the District Court of the U.S. for the Southern District of California, Central Division, 1938-1961, Civil Case Files, 13312Y, Box 217, NARA-Riverside (abbrev. Civil Case Files).

128. Box 222, 13357-13366, Transcript, 15 August 1951, Civil Case Files.

129. Transcript, 13 November 1951, Box 1298, Smith Act Trial Record.

130. Affidavit of Philip Marshall Connelly, 21 November 1951, Box 1297, Smith Act Trial Record.

131. Dorothy Healey, Oral History.

132. Dorothy Healey, Oral History.

summoned to testify. Arthur Wilcox, a reporter for the *Times*, also appeared as a witness for the prosecution.¹³³ Otis Phillips, Jr. appeared to join the staff of the *Los Angeles Herald Express* and the CP in 1947 just to get closer to Connelly in order to spy on him.¹³⁴ Toward the end of this lengthy trial, attorney Margolis demanded a mistrial since the "press" was "stirring up hatred" of the CP. The ruling? Denied.¹³⁵

Abraham Lincoln Wirin, the defense counsel with ties to the ACLU, recalled during this trial that during its predecessor in Manhattan, "by far the largest portion of six months taken there was with respect to" lengthy recitations of the works of Marx and Lenin, then imputing to the defendants passages that seemed to violate the operative statute. The same held true in L.A. Yet, a number of more substantive issues arose too.¹³⁶

For example, in a sense the case involved the Party's repudiation of Browder, this shift interpreted by the prosecution as the CP moving toward more militancy within the ambit of the statute. A key piece of evidence was the letter of French Communist Jacques Duclos, castigating the Kansan's leadership. In that spirit, CP patriarch William Z. Foster railed against "Browder revisionism" in a party where "39% of our membership were industrial workers with only 19% from the basic industries," a perceived lamentable "condition which also existed in California."¹³⁷ The leading California Communist—Schneiderman—was among those who felt it necessary to apologize profusely for his "revisionist attitude" in the aftermath of Browder's unceremonious ouster.¹³⁸

Although the prosecution did not single out explicit agitation on the Negro Question as worthy of imprisonment, it conspicuously noted the 1946 shift to "block layoffs of Negro workers from skilled and semi-skilled jobs" while "seniority regulations must be flexibly applied," along with a "permanent" Fair Employment Practices Committee.¹³⁹

Likewise highlighted was the controversial "Struggle against White Chauvinism," spearheaded by Pettis Perry, who wound up standing trial in the so-

133. Transcript, 14 November 1951, Box 1298, Smith Act Trial Record.

134. *Los Angeles Herald Express*, 9 May 1952, and Transcript, 9 May 1952, in *Ibid.*, Box 1343, Smith Act Trial Record.

135. Transcript, 9 June 1952, Box 1345, Smith Act Trial Record.

136. Remarks by A.L. Wirin, Transcript, 14 November 1951, Box 1298, Smith Act Trial Record.

137. W.Z. Foster to "Dear Comrades," 27 June 1946, Box 1317, Smith Act Trial Record. As of this year, the local CP office was at 124 West Sixth Street, #525, with Nemmy Sparks serving as Chair and Healey as Organizational Secretary. The San Diego County Committee of the CP, with George Lohr serving as Chair and Nancy Rosenfield as Secretary-Treasurer, was sited at 432 F Street #319 in the city: Box 1319, Smith Act Trial Record.

138. Transcript, 24 March 1952, Box 1340, Smith Act Trial Record.

139. Report by Nemmy Sparks, 15-16 September 1946, Box 1317, Smith Act Trial Record.

called "Second String" prosecution of the leadership in Manhattan.¹⁴⁰ Yet this laudable battle encased contradictions rarely addressed—although they surfaced at trial. Per usual, the pamphlet "The Struggle for Negro Rights and the Struggle Against White Chauvinism," issued in 1948 by the CP, described this minority as the "most revolutionary ally of the working class." Of course, Negroes were overwhelmingly working-class themselves, and describing them as an ally led to the wrongheaded inference that this "working class" did not include Negroes. Practically speaking, this may not have made much difference since in Greater

L.A. as early as 1946 the CP "worked out special training courses to put at least fifty Negro comrades through Marxist study courses" and actually "over seventy five comrades...benefited by these classes."¹⁴¹ A Negro comrade who may have benefited, if only indirectly, was William Taylor, from the island of Nevis, who by 1951 was featured at the Norway Hall, 3829 Piedmont Avenue, in Oakland.¹⁴²

Dobbs insisted that there be a campaign to elect more Negroes to high office in the union movement. "The AFL in Texas, the home of white supremacy, has just elected a Negro to their state executive board"¹⁴³—how could California do less?

Raked over with a fine-toothed comb were the finer details of CP strength in Los Angeles. At their 1945 convention the Van Nuys club was the leader in literature sales, amounting to \$6.91 per member, though the 59th Assembly District at \$962.60 was the overall leader, followed by Hollywood at \$773.81 and Echo Park at \$565.62. "Browderism" had exacted a toll, with membership in June 1944 being 3552 and dropping to 3095 by September 1944. This included 45% men and 55% women, but a mere 1% of Mexican ancestry and only 8% Negro; 45% were in unions and 19% in basic industry. By 1945 recruits were comprised of 57% men and 43% women, including 5% of Mexican ancestry, 16½% Negro, 48% union members and 22½% from basic industry.¹⁴⁴

By 1945, L.A. had raised \$39,000 or 112% of the statewide total for the party press, and by 1946, \$68,000 or 113%; by 1946, \$78,000 or 100% of the total, and by 1948, according to Alice Ward—county Press Director—her domain had "broken all previous records by achieving 75% of a \$120,000 quota in not more than 6 weeks time."¹⁴⁵ By 1949, L.A. again "set [the] pace" statewide, speedily attaining a quota of \$80,000 with San Francisco next at \$30,000—though this was only about 72% of their quota. In other words, L.A. was not only surpassing its

140. Memorandum, 21 July 1949, Box 1317, Smith Act Trial Record. See also Box 1320, "The Fight for the Freedom of the Negro People," 12 February 1946, issued by the State Education Committee of the CP in San Francisco.

141. "The Struggle for Negro Rights and the Struggle Against White Chauvinism," issued by statewide CP, 18 May 1948, Box 1320, Smith Act Trial Record.

142. Leaflet, 14 March 1951, Box 1320, Smith Act Trial Record.

143. Remarks by Dobbs, Box 1328, Smith Act Trial Record.

144. "Delegates' Book," 15-16 September 1945, Box 1321, Smith Act Trial Record.

145. Remarks, ca. 1948, Box 1328, Smith Act Trial Record.

assigned quota for fundraising, but often was exceeding by itself the entire statewide goals.¹⁴⁶

By 1950 defendant Doyle had gotten more than 600,000 votes in her race for State Superintendent of Public Education—the “largest by far recorded by a Communist in the United States,” said an agog reporter—and of this mammoth total 275,000 in L.A. County. Notably, L.A. was the only county in six figures, with San Francisco trailing far behind in second place with 45,000.¹⁴⁷ Defendant Oleta Yates had received 10,000 votes as a candidate for the state legislature and 40,000 in a race for the San Francisco County Board of Supervisors. Her father had founded a local branch of the Teamsters.¹⁴⁸

In short, the prosecution knew that trend lines were upward as the trial began. By 1948 there was a statewide membership of 8650, a growth of 67% since 1946. L.A. County had the lion's share with 5100, described as performing “the most outstanding job in party growth and consolidation in the entire district.” Negro recruiting had risen from 20% of the total in 1946 to over 33% in 1947 and 1948 but “fluctuation” was “alarmingly high in some counties...as high as 100%.” Explanations shed light on why simultaneously a campaign against “White Chauvinism” erupted along with growth in the ranks, even as the Party detailed the “domineering and overbearing attitude toward Negro comrades” driven by the “poison of white supremacy.”¹⁴⁹ According to Healey, at a time of tribulation and rumor-mongering fed by the state, about 200 Reds were expelled in the County on charges of “White Chauvinism” during the 1950-1952 era. Added pressure was piled on when Socialist leader Norman Thomas adamantly opposed the idea of Communists teaching in public schools, a former redoubt of Red strength.¹⁵⁰ Bolstering this idea was the eminent L. Dale Coffman, Dean of the Law School at UCLA, who in a keynote before the California Teachers' Association, rebuked “Communism coddling.”¹⁵¹

So prompted, the comrade Rose Chernin spoke up vigorously, but her impassioned intervention was surpassed by that of Israel Amter, who may have inspired nascent Panthers when he insisted that “in order to convince the Negro people of the sincerity of our Party program in the struggle for their rights, white comrades must even be willing to die in defense of those rights.”¹⁵² (By 26 July 1951, as an earnest of her effectiveness, Chernin was arrested because of alleged Smith Act violations and then was held until 8 December because of inability to meet stiffened bail requirements.)¹⁵³ Subsequently, Chernin, said Branton, was in

146. *Daily People's World*, 9 September 1949.

147. *Daily People's World*, 7 July 1950, Box 1330, Smith Act Trial Record.

148. Transcript, 6 February 1952, Box 1337, Smith Act Trial Record.

149. Report, 21 August 1948, Box 1328, Smith Act Trial Record.

150. Dorothy Healey, Oral History.

151. *Los Angeles Herald-Express*, 17 February 1953.

152. Discussion, 1948, Box 1328, Smith Act Trial Record.

153. Transcript, 13 March 1952, Box 1339, Smith Act Trial Record.

a "pretty serious automobile accident" enduring "cerebral concussions and bruised sternum" and pervasive "pain," emblematic of her steadfastness.¹⁵⁴ She arrived in court in early April 1952 with "extreme pain in her chest," he said.¹⁵⁵

So far, so militant. However, William Taylor—then promoted on this front—may have had questions about this approach. For by the late 1940s he had been in town for a mere 18 months yet, said a party observer, "his work has been critically examined three times by members of the [leadership]" while being "singled out." Healey was "self critical" in this regard and was criticized in turn.¹⁵⁶

Despite her bravado, Healey subsequently made the admission that it was only in 1945, after the kerfuffle involving the ousted Browder, that she began to "read Communist material more seriously than I had before," not what one would expect from a leading comrade. With acute hindsight, the foregoing notwithstanding, she also said that she sensed problems with the Browder line even before his sacking. She also denied that the dissolution of the Comintern was consistent with Browder's turn. In any case, this clamor around Browder left her "crying" and "brokenhearted," though bent on repairing the damage. Ultimately, her idea of repair was to turn against the cardinal Red principle of "democratic centralism,"¹⁵⁷ i.e., robust discussion, then the minority following and executing the will of the majority.

The Smith Act trial proved to be devastating to the CP. It was a rout, the comrades akin to a fire station where firefighters spent most of their time preventing blazes from reaching their bunks. Precious funds were expended in legal defense, as top comrades were first in and out of jail, then focused on whether to disappear into the underground or not. Mass struggles did not take a holiday, but with the comrades often missing in action, harm fell on their overall reputation. Still, the trial—and the defendants' tribulations—droned on in 1952 and thereafter, culminating in a vacuum in the struggle for socialism itself, creating an opening filled by the BPP.

154. Transcript, 27 March 1952, Box 1340, Smith Act Trial Record.

155. Transcript, 3 April 1952, Box 1340, Smith Act Trial Record.

156. "On Vigilance in the Struggle Against White Chauvinism....Political Weaknesses," 1948, Box 1328, Smith Act Trial Record.

157. Dorothy Healey, Oral History.

Chapter 5

Communists on Trial, Part II, 1951-1958

Revealingly, several turning points in the Smith Act trial in L.A. involved Black witnesses—for the prosecution. This helped to sabotage the defendants, whose credibility rested in part on their defense of “the Negro people,” and also illuminated the path for the grand transition, soon to come, of high court-sponsored desegregation. Doubters could be assuaged by the sight of Negroes bringing to heel the latest “menace,” Communists, in the courtroom and on the battlefields of the Korean peninsula. The NAACP could ride this wave, surviving as their peers in the Civil Rights Congress, for example, were knocked aside like so many tenpins in a bowling alley. However, in the short term, this only paved the way for another left alternative—the Black Panther Party. And in the longer term, as the BPP’s influence eroded, this led to an unraveled political ecosystem that did not tolerate far-reaching critiques of capitalism or imperialism, nor firm opposition to either. The result? Withering standards of living for the dispossessed generally, and Negroes specifically, accompanied by debacles in Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, and other distressed sites too numerous to note, since an essential part of the bargain was Negroes dropping deep criticism of U.S. foreign policy—empowering further the right wing.

Nevertheless, there were breadcrumbs scattered along the path, pointing the way to the turmoil of the 1960s. As of 1950, Healey and Dobbs were campaigning for the right of Communists to teach at the University of California, which gathered momentum when Angela Davis’s post at UCLA was threatened precisely on that basis.¹ After all, precisely at issue—supposedly—at their trial was deploying force and violence to transform the status quo, adumbrating the “armed struggle” that soon was to captivate so many. One prosecution witness spoke darkly of a Communist who spoke of the effort to “receive firearms in the event of revolution in the South.” Margolis countered by adding the caveat that this would occur “in the event of [counter]-revolutionary action by the fascists in the South”²—but he did not repudiate the idea per se. Defendant Frank Carlson, who also happened to be Jewish—born in Poland in 1913—left a broad hint for the

1. Dorothy Healey and Ben Dobbs to Dear Friend, 18 April 1950, Box 1321, Smith Act Trial Record.
2. Transcript, 7 May 1952, Box 1343, Smith Act Trial Record.

BPP; he was cited at trial as saying that the "party has ways of getting guns"³ to foil lynchings of Negroes, for example. On his behalf, his lawyer added cogently that "Negro people in the South who were subject to lynching should have arms to defend themselves against lynch mobs,"⁴ heartfelt to be sure, but possibly harmful to defendants' interest in allowing the camel's nose of force and violence into the prosecutorial tent.⁵

When the Negro witness, Leonard Patterson, born in 1906, unveiled his detonative testimony concerning comrades supposedly paying rapt attention as they were instructed in the ins and outs of guerrilla warfare in Moscow in the 1930s, defense counsel, instead of seeking to rebut him frontally, instead waded into the weeds of peripheral issues. Tellingly, this witness's testimony was the only one that defense counsel Norman Leonard admitted had impact on jurors.⁶

This was Patterson's first trip to Los Angeles, though he had been a frequent and effective witness in deportation cases, including that involving the man born as Stjepan Mesaros in Croatia, before materializing in Pennsylvania as Communist leader Steve Nelson. Patterson had been earning \$5 to \$15 weekly as Communist cadre, but was bumped up to \$25 daily, plus a \$9 per diem for the authorities. He was wholly unsatisfied with the former wage, and this disparity was a factor in causing him to weigh in against the defendants, while also casting disparagement in the direction of Communist leader Gil Green—born as Gilbert Greenberg in Chicago to Russian Jewish parents.⁷ (Too much can be made of the proportion of Jewish Americans in the CP. Defendant Loretta Stack was born in 1913 of Polish Catholic ancestry and Oleta Yates was born in 1910 in San Francisco of Irish heritage.⁸ Still, given their small percentage of the overall U.S. population, it is uncanny how many Jewish Americans wound up in the CP.)

Patterson's past conveyed credibility concerning matters at issue, and not just because he was a Negro. He joined the Young Communist League in 1928 and the

3. Transcript, 22 July 1952, Box 1347, Smith Act Trial Record.

4. Transcript, 6 June 1952, Box 1345, Smith Act Trial Record.

5. Although the CP may have foreshadowed the armed militancy of the BPP, unlike the latter they were not sartorial pioneers: Transcript, 7 February 1952, Box 1337: Defendant Loretta Stack wore a "plaid kerchief," while Frank Spector wore a "gray suit and red shirt" (and "black hair"). Al Richmond had on a "brown suit"; Frank Carlson in a "light suit." Mickey Lima, "light suit" and "blue tie." Transcript 25 March 1952, Box 1340: Henry Steinberg in a "grey suit, red tie;" Frank Spector, "red tie, grey suit." Transcript, 24 March 1952, Box 1340: Healey with "her hand up to her chin. Red dress with a checkered coat." Transcript 16 April 1952, Box 1341: Lima in a "red tie." Schneiderman in a "blue suit and glasses." Stack in a "dark blue dress." Lambert in a "light blue shirt and green tie." Yates bearing a "white hat." Richmond with a "red tie." Transcript, 29 April 1952, Box 1342: Carlson with "glasses on, the red checked tie and tannish suit." Transcript, 20 May 1952, Box 1344: Rose Chermin in "grey blouse" complementing her "gray hair." Transcript, 17 April 1952, Box 1341: Bernadette Doyle in "black dress and a hat, gray hair." Transcript 30 April 1952, Box 1342: Oleta Yates in "white hat...grey suit," all above, Smith Act Trial Record.

6. Transcript, 9 June 1952, Box 1345, Smith Act Trial Record.

7. Transcript, 18 April 1952, Box 1341, Smith Act Trial Record.

8. Transcript, 10 June 1952, Box 1345, Smith Act Trial Record.

CP in 1930, and by 1931 was enrolled at the Lenin School. Defendant Al Richmond was his "assistant" there, he said, and he also fingered defendant Loretta Stack, then known as "Lottie Keith," the surname inherited from her now dead spouse, Irving Keith, slain during the Spanish Civil War: they had been introduced to each other by Gil Green. Patterson also pointed to Stack (Keith) joining yet another CP—that of the Soviet Union. He also managed to take a shot at Negro CP leader Henry Winston, as counsel protested vainly that this was all irrelevant since it occurred before the passage of the Smith Act in 1940. He also fingered famed CP instructor, Jacob "Pop" Mindel, born to Jewish parents in Minsk in 1881, who also taught at the Lenin School.⁹ Branton cagily argued that whatever conspiracy had existed ended when Browder was ousted, with possibly a new one beginning in July 1945, making the indictment imprecise at best and the earlier so-called conspiracy rendered invalid by the statute of limitations. The ruling? Denied.¹⁰ Branton argued expertly that "there must be a showing the defendant himself believed and understood Marxism-Leninism to contain an advocacy of force and violence...and also had the requisite intent."¹¹ Ruling? Denied. Branton demanded that testimony about defendants supposedly singing Soviet anthems be stricken. Ruling? Denied.¹² Of course, when the activist known as "Mother Bloor" sang the Soviet National Anthem, in Russian no less, at the birth of the United Nations in San Francisco in 1945, it was viewed differently during those bygone days of the Moscow-Washington antifascist alliance.¹³ At one point, attorney Margolis was in a snit after the judge repeatedly admonished Branton. He demanded a mistrial.¹⁴ The ruling? Denied.

These setbacks aside, his co-counsel Wirin was doubtlessly correct when he said that Branton, often in the forefront of interrogations, was "the briefest of the staff on this side" as other attorneys seemed to equate long windedness with effectiveness,¹⁵ a reflection of how defendant Richmond characterized Branton as being "young, bright, quick."¹⁶ Wirin knew this all too well in that he was the counsel who in far-flung expositions expounded on the Inquisition, persecution of the Huguenots and other complex issues. It was also Wirin who took time to inform the assembled about a "dream" of speaking to the jury three days and nights "and every one of you was sound asleep but I kept on talking,"¹⁷ which some jurors may have thought had the ring of authenticity. Wirin was not dreaming when in March 1952 Margolis announced that this advocate would be

9. Transcript, 15 April 1952, Box 1341, Smith Act Trial Record.

10. Transcript, 4 June 1952, Box 1344, Smith Act Trial Record.

11. Transcript, 23 May 1952, Box 1344, Smith Act Trial Record.

12. Transcript, 23 May 1952, Box 1344, Smith Act Trial Record.

13. Transcript, 9 May 1952, Box 1343, Smith Act Trial Record.

14. Transcript, 5 May 1952, Box 1342, Smith Act Trial Record.

15. Transcript, 2 July 1952, Box 1346, Smith Act Trial Record.

16. Richmond, *Long View*, 324.

17. Transcript, 18 July 1952, Box 1347, Smith Act Trial Record.

absent for a while due to illness, as if the stress of this trial was biting.¹⁸ Then it was Wirin's turn to inform that Margolis's health had taken a "turn for the worse."¹⁹ A few weeks later yet another attorney fell ill.²⁰ By late May 1952, Wirin sounding exhausted, announced the obvious: "This has been a long case [with] long arguments [and] a long record."²¹

A prosecution witness, Margaret Louise Ames, born in Denver in 1913, joined the CP in June 1941 at the behest of the FBI, stayed until April 1943, then rejoined in Oakland from June 1947 until September 1950. When she did not identify defendant Al Richmond accurately, she explained haltingly, "it has been a long time...I have got the shakes so bad...just nerves...I'd like to have a cigarette."²² This trial was ordeal by combat, as if medieval times had reappeared—though even if the defense had the last man standing, it still remained likely that they would not prevail. For the prosecution, exhausting the defense—physically and financially above all—was part of their strategy, insuring that at trial's end they would hardly be in a position to return to the halcyon days of the 1940s.

This trial was in many ways a judgment on the shifting sands of Moscow-Washington relations. What was kosher in 1945 was verboten by 1946. And pre-1941 was totally off limits. One prosecution witness, Nat Honing, who like many testifiers was a regular presence on the Smith Act trial circuit—he had been on the witness stand in seven different cases by 1952—was keen to show that the epochal General Strike of 1934 in San Francisco was planned in Moscow or alternatively by Browder who sought sanction from the Soviet Union;²³ it was as if wages and working conditions for stevedores were irrelevant.

Yet defendant Stack was Patterson's prime target. "She said that she [had] experience field stripping machine guns," along with constructing a "Molotov cocktail or had training to that effect." He added credibility by adding offhandedly, "I had training in that [too]...we also had the same training." Vainly, attorney Norman Leonard tried to show that this explosive concoction was not named "Molotov" during the pre-1939 era.²⁴ Testimony was replete with references to books on "how to make bombs and booby traps," further compromising the beset defendants.²⁵ Prosecution witness Paul Estrada claimed that he got this combustible book from a Communist, James Hudson.²⁶ (Also part of the massive mountain of evidence was a booklet on "Land Mines and Booby

18. Transcript, 10 March 1952, Box 1339, Smith Act Trial Record.

19. Transcript, 13 May 1952, Box 1339, Smith Act Trial Record.

20. Transcript, 2 April 1952, Box 1340, Smith Act Trial Record.

21. Transcript, 20 May 1952, Box 1344, Smith Act Trial Record.

22. Transcript, 5 May 1952, Box 1342, Smith Act Trial Record.

23. Transcript, 20 May 1952, Box 1343, Smith Act Trial Record.

24. Transcript, 18 April 1952, Box 1341, Smith Act Trial Record.

25. Transcript, 2 May 1952, Box 1342, Smith Act Trial Record.

26. Transcript, 6 May 1952, Box 1342, Smith Act Trial Record.

Traps" from the U.S. Corps of Engineers, as if their doings could be imputed only to the defendants.)²⁷

Troubling for anticommunists was that this testimony often intersected with the putatively distinct category of defense of Negroes. One prosecution witness testified that the Communists "never once mentioned that the Communist Party was going to use the Negro people as soldiers in the event of a war against the Soviet Union."²⁸ Should defendants have celebrated or sunk into depression, since the word "mentioned" did a lot of work in this formulation, leaving open the possibility that this sensitive matter had been explored, but went unmentioned? To little avail, defendants demanded mistrials when a prosecution witness was asked about confidential discussions about overthrowing the government, and again when "revolution" was bruited.²⁹ Vernon Sutherland, a carpenter at a strategically sited arsenal near Vallejo, recalled conversations with defendant Lambert and Negro Communist Hursel Alexander in the immediate aftermath of the turning point that was the ignition of the war in Korea in June 1950. There was hushed discussion of "revolution," said this prosecution witness, and subtly he asked if this meant ballots or bullets and, per Malcolm X some years later, Alexander seemed to suggest the latter, he said.³⁰

Branton argued unsuccessfully that testimony should be stricken from the record, i.e., that "there could be no peaceable transition and that blood would flow in the streets." Interestingly, when this flammable topic arose, inexorably it seemed that Hursel Alexander was mentioned.³¹ Ultimately, the unindicted Alexander—whose indictment might have won the attention of Black Angelenos—was spoken of in hushed tones as a "co-conspirator."³²

Finally, attorney Margolis sought without success to establish the line that Marxism-Leninism in the U.S. was for non-violence and peace—as long as democratic channels were open, but all bets were off if fascism raised its ugly visage. In line with prevailing ideology, he did so with reverential references to the now discredited Thomas Jefferson³³—but the jury did not buy this shotgun marriage of Marxism and slaveholding. Actually, an adroit juror may have thought it disingenuous—too clever by half—to discuss on the one hand reverence for the Negro Question and abhorrence of enslavement and, on the other hand, praising enslavers.

Sensing an opening, the prosecution then read the beatified Declaration of Independence to defendant, Oleta Yates, and asked slyly if the conditions for

27. Pamphlet, 1 November 1943, Box 1317, Smith Act Trial Record.

28. Transcript, 5 May 1952, Box 1342, Smith Act Trial Record.

29. Transcript, 9 May 1952, Box 1343, Smith Act Trial Record.

30. Transcript, 8 May 1952, Box 1343, Smith Act Trial Record.

31. Transcript, 27 May 1952, Box 1344, Smith Act Trial Record.

32. Transcript, 5 June 1952, Box 1344, Smith Act Trial Record.

33. Transcript, 5 June 1952, Box 1344, Smith Act Trial Record.

revolution sketched there obtained at that moment. "Indeed not, indeed not," she replied instantaneously, intending to convey intuitive obviousness. Naturally, the prosecution examined her intently on the idea of the "dictatorship of the proletariat."³⁴ Finally, Yates stuttered that there was an aspect of the corpus of Marxism-Leninism that was "correct for the time it was written" but "no longer correct" due to "changed circumstances."³⁵

Some of these references to hallowed history rang truer, for example, when defendant Oleta Yates sought to place the CP in the train of events sparked by abolitionists, in that emancipation benefited "all people" since it "allowed for the further development of the productive forces." But as was customary, she ignored the devastation of the Indigenous that quickly followed in the wake of emancipation and, in fact, was taking place as this monumental victory was unfolding. As was the pattern, she referred with appreciation to the supposed legacy of bourgeois democracy in the republic—gliding neatly past the nettlesome point that such rights did not necessarily apply to Negroes, enslaved or not, not to mention the Indigenous (apartheid bourgeois democracy would have been a more apt descriptor). Naturally, she claimed that the words of Jefferson were "part of my own thinking."³⁶ The jurors—Euro-Americans judging Euro-Americans—did not buy this, just as they may have reacted negatively to Communists chuckling about the suicide of Pentagon chief James Forrestal, apparently driven mad by the specter of radicalism.³⁷

Yates was chosen to explain the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism for the jury but some of her testimony rang oddly. Party chieftain Eugene Dennis? "I have met Mr. Dennis once or twice," she said. Top Negro leader Ben Davis of Harlem? "I have met Mr. Davis once or twice." Gil Green? Did not know him. "I am not acquainted with Mr. [Gus] Hall," she said, speaking of the future CP chief. "I have never met him," adding, "I have met Elizabeth Gurley Flynn on occasion,"³⁸ the leading woman comrade. What of party patriarch William Z. Foster? She met him "briefly" and "have never had a close working relationship" with him.³⁹

Possibly, the thinking was to erode the idea of "conspiracy" at the heart of the indictment since a top comrade did not even know leaders. But this threadbare rationale may have struck jurors oddly given what they thought they knew about the CP.

The over-representation of Jewish Americans during this trial anticipated how the erosion of Jim Crow benefited this minority too—and not accidentally,

34. Transcript, 30 June 1952, Box 1346, Smith Act Trial Record.

35. Transcript, 20 July 1952, Box 1346, Smith Act Trial Record.

36. Transcript, 18 June 1952, Box 1345, Smith Act Trial Record. On liquidation of Indigenes, see Home, *Counter-Revolution of 1836*, passim.

37. Transcript, 16 April 1952, Box 1341, Smith Act Trial Record.

38. Transcript, 1 July 1952, Box 1346, Smith Act Trial Record.

39. Transcript, 27 June 1952, Box 1346, Smith Act Trial Record.

as it was seen as a way to woo them too away from radicalism. This point was exposed dramatically on 10 April 1952 when defense counsel Margolis announced portentously that "tonight is the first, or, rather the second night of an important Jewish holiday, that we might adjourn a little early today."⁴⁰

By late July 1952, in the heat of the dog days of summer, the case was lurching to a close with 13,000 pages of transcripts and 600 exhibits,⁴¹ many of them classics of Marxism-Leninism imputed to the defendants, often successfully. "This is the longest case that has ever been tried in this district,"⁴² said the prosecutor—appropriate given the immense stakes at play. Months earlier, in early April 1952, Branton complained "this trial has gone on for quite a long period of time...and [there is] no telling how much longer it will go on."⁴³ True. Yet at sentencing, defendant Ben Dobbs repeated by way of requiem the still impressive county-wide CP membership totals in the recent past,⁴⁴ a figure not reached since by a longshot.

* * *

As noted above, a particularly effective witness for the prosecution was the Negro Leonard Patterson, who testified about the doings at the Lenin School in Moscow. Then there was Timothy Evans, described by an admirer as "Negro, well balanced, well educated and articulate...former football star at Xavier [New Orleans]," who presented "testimony...particularly dangerous to Loretta Stack" and Northern California party honcho Mickey Lima. Completing the circle, a "dramatic moment" arrived when he was cross-examined by Negro counsel, Leo Branton.⁴⁵ The prosecution also relied on the words of yet another Negro, McKinley Harlan, described as their "agent": of "average height and weight; gray at the temples and slightly bald...well dressed." He would arrive at CP events "with a group of other Negroes," providing camouflage. He even had a pseudonym; these revelations finally having been exposed by the "Disciplinary Commission" of the CP by August 1946.⁴⁶

The apostate—former Communist—Louis Rosser was also a Negro. Even an admirer admitted that he "floundered," or as Branton expressed, he was "upset" with him. His "credibility was shaken" and he was "belligerent...creating more

40. Transcript, 10 April 1952, Box 1341, Smith Act Trial Record.

41. Transcript, 28 July 1952, Box 1348, Smith Act Trial Record.

42. Transcript, 30 July 1952, Box 1348, Smith Act Trial Record.

43. Transcript, 1 April 1952, Box 1340, Smith Act Trial Record.

44. Transcript, 7 August 1952, Box 1348, Smith Act Trial Record.

45. *Forntight*, 28 April 1952, Box 1, Schneiderman Trial Records.

46. Transcript, 2 May 1952, Box 1342, Smith Act Trial Record.

turmoil and [more] courtroom squabbling than any other witness."⁴⁷ The stoolpigeon Scarletto set the courtroom aflutter when he misidentified Walter Martin, described as a "prominent Negro Communist who ran for Sheriff," mistaking him for the Reverend R.L. Turner of San Francisco—obviously, the old bromide that all Negroes looked alike was overdue for radical reformation.⁴⁸

Yet this temporary embarrassment was overwhelmed by Evans. Born in 1917 in Arkansas, he graduated in 1940 and followed the migratory tide to California by 1942—and became a spy for the FBI. He was a member of the Harriet Tubman Club of the CP and was involved—unfortunately—in the protracted battles over white chauvinism. His testimony about Roscoe Proctor, a rising Negro stevedore and Red, alerted the authorities to his magnetism. He was voluble, too, possibly enhancing his value as a persuasive witness. He also alerted to the fact that "we have officials who are members of both parties," meaning the CP and Progressive Party. He detailed the campaign against minstrelsy by the CP, implicitly providing pointers as to how this crusade could be sabotaged. Typically, he collected signatures for the Robeson-William Patterson petition to charge the U.S. with genocide—then turned the names over to the FBI; he did the same for the Jerry Newson case of the Civil Rights Congress, and ditto for those who were righteously picketing the Bank of America pressuring them to hire Negro staff. As he also did when he gathered subscriptions for the Communist newspaper. Yes, he knew Jessica Mitford, the British-born Red, "very well," as he also knew Hursel Alexander.⁴⁹ Evans became a regular on the anticommunist circuit, testifying in 1957 about his doings in the Harriet Tubman Club in West Oakland, where he surveilled Roscoe Proctor, "Chairman of the West Oakland Section."⁵⁰

The CP had thought Louis Rosser was walking in the gigantic footsteps of Alexander, but that fanciful idea melted like a snowfall on a hot summer day when he appeared in court as a prosecution witness. He resided at 90 East 118th Street and had been in L.A. since 1921—then joined the CP as a prized Negro recruit in 1932—before departing in 1945. During the time of his membership, he attended party training school in New York State in 1938-1939 at "an estate" with a "big mansion" including "cabins and guest houses"; there were classes "all [day] and two hours at night." He met Dobbs in 1932 and Healey in 1933: "most of the meetings of the Communist Party and the [Young Communist League] were underground," he confided conspiratorially. As early as 1932 he was drawing a stipend of \$5 weekly from the CP: he was cadre. By 1945 it was \$27 weekly, a

47. *Fortnight*, 12 May 1952, Box 1, Schneiderman Trial Records.

48. CEDC Newsletter, 19 March 1952, Box 1, Schneiderman Trial Records.

49. Transcript, 21 March 1952, Box 1340, Smith Act Trial Record.

50. Testimony of Timothy Evans, 3 May 1957, Part I: CPUSA, Reel 27, Subversive Activities Control Board Records. See also Robert F. Kennedy v. Procter, Subversive Activities Control Board, 19 November 1962, Box 130, Norman Leonard Papers: Attorneys John Abt and Ann Fagan Ginger are his attorneys. See here testimony of Lula Mae Thompson: She joined the CP in 1953 and left in 1962, receiving \$75 monthly to spy: she baked cakes for the comrades.

token of party growth. He was an organizer for three years, principally for the "James Ford branch" of the CP, sited along Central Avenue. He had known Revels Cayton, the suspected top Negro Red for 20 years, and was aware of the beef between Connelly and the elder Franklin Alexander, after the latter was fired as janitor tending to the CIO building at Slauson and Avalon. He also knew Hursel Alexander and recalled a CP meeting on "Central Avenue when [he] was arrested on a street corner and taken to jail." Rosser also had served as head of the Angelo Herndon Club of the YCL, which had an office on the 4000 block of Central Avenue. From there he detected a shift in the tactics of the authorities after the General Strike of 1934, for then they did not hesitate in breaking up meetings with force, a kind of muscular deterrence.⁵¹ "I was an unemployed college man," Rosser admitted by way of explicating his latching on to the lifeline tossed to him by the Reds.

Contrary to the remembrances of others, Rosser averred that the CP and Upton Sinclair "worked very closely" on his signature 1934 gubernatorial campaign. He also may have rehabilitated the lagging reputation of Negroes in confronting the internment since he personally "knew a lot of the Negroes who were sympathetic to the Japanese" and when they "went to concentration camps" they repaid this kindness with "trucks and houses and radios" and other items they couldn't take with them. Attorney Wirin and this witness had a lengthy and combative battle that hardly ceased when Branton tackled him. He described "over a hundred conversations" of the witness with the FBI, "in the last two years; isn't that true?" he asked accusingly. His perfervid response? "Don't shout at me like that." He likely had similar exchanges with Pettis Perry, premier Negro CP leader in the Southland since—said Rosser—he was "jealous of me." But Branton pressed on and in this Negro vs. Negro set-to, Branton accused him of "drunkenness" and "misappropriation"—and "being homosexual."⁵²

This was an expression of the CP's then attitude—which was to evolve in coming decades—but the wider issue was this: Was this evolution hampered by the intense pressure to which they were subjected, or did it reflect a deeper malaise? If the former, how did this trend impact the overall Black Liberation Movement? If the latter, what were the compelling societal or ideological forces?

Branton was in no mood to soften his aggressiveness and was lucky to escape from this trial without being jailed, unlike George Crockett in Manhattan, the CP attorney and future Black Congressman from Detroit. The FBI had pressured one defense counsel to become a spy, indicative of their aggressiveness.⁵³ "Two days before the case started," he spat out, "our defense office was literally swarming with [FBI] agents" who "followed us to the street, followed us into a cafeteria where we had lunch.... one day I came out of the building with one of my clients,

51. Transcript 17-18 April 1952, Box 1341, Smith Act Trial Record.

52. Transcript, 24 April 1952, Box 1341, Smith Act Trial Record.

53. Schneiderman, *Dissent on Trial*, 135.

Mr. Dobbs, and as we came out of the building we were picked up by an agent," for as we "got to the corner of Ninth and Spring," these interlopers "parked behind my automobile" intimidatingly. Just before his impassioned diatribe, Schneiderman recalled how he had gone to 321 Divisadero in San Francisco in order to interview witnesses and—surprise—a "movie camera was installed in a second floor window across the street opposite the entrance to the hall, taking movies of everyone entering and leaving the hall," a blatant "denial of due process," he said rebukingly.⁵⁴ The CP's porous investigation allowed Daisy Van Dorn, formerly surnamed Rodman, to spy for the FBI on the Reds from her post as superintendent of CP headquarters at 942 Market Street in San Francisco.⁵⁵

In any case, in happier times Rosser and Perry were pictured, the former sporting a modishly premature "Afro" hairdo and listed as an organizer in the 14th congressional district: 70% of the unemployed, it was announced morosely, "live in this territory," referencing the sprawling area encircling their headquarters at 2308 Griffith Avenue. 90% of the "Negro people live here," it was said, speaking of a vicinity now heavily comprised of those of Mexican origin. But then, as the Depression was about to bite incisively, there were "probably more peoples organizations meeting [there] than in any other district in Southern California"—that this was also a Negro neighborhood was hardly irrelevant and bespoke the presence on the witness stand of the likes of Rosser and Evans.⁵⁶

Rosser also knew the elder Franklin Alexander "well. We had a house together. We got drunk together...we stole vegetables...together. We went on picket lines together. I taught him everything he knew," he bragged. "I know him well," he repeated; "he went to Spain illegally and fought" and then he was "living off my \$5 a week and his brother," Hursel, "didn't have anything." A furious CP circulated 5000 leaflets denouncing and renouncing him. Rosser plunged on boasting next to Branton, "I make as much money as you, \$345 a month," largely as a stoopigeon; either playing to the jury or expressing a bitter truth, Branton replied tersely, "I might agree with that," which would hardly be the case after this expert counsel came to represent Angela Davis two decades later—and represent the estate of guitarist Jimi Hendrix simultaneously. Rosser was not shy about braggadocio, alleging at one point, "I was a great football player in Arizona."

Judge Mathes was unimpressed—with the defense counsel. Branton read into the record a letter from the CP from September 1945 accusing Rosser of various misdeeds, including ties to the FBI, and demanded a mistrial. "I will not permit you to interrupt me, Mr. Branton" was the response from the bench, prompting

54. Transcript, 25 April 1952, Box 1342, Smith Act Trial Record.

55. Transcript, 9 May 1952, Box 1343, Smith Act Trial Record.

56. Pamphlet, "2 Decades of Progress," ca. 1939, Box 1327, Smith Act Trial Record.

Branton to refuse to continue his cross-examination because of the "court's limitation" on his right to do so.⁵⁷

As early as September 1945 Chairman Nemmy Sparks instructed "Dear Comrades" in a missive "to be read," he insisted, "at all club meetings," denounce Rosser, formerly an "organizer" for the CP but "over a long period has been in contact with the FBI," a token of his "irresponsible...drunkenness" and his abhorrent "penetrating into other Negro movements."⁵⁸ By July 1946 his appeal was heard at 124 West 6th Street, and he was found "guilty of drunkenness, financial responsibility, promiscuous personal behavior"; worse, he was an "agent for the FBI" and "cannot be trusted" since he was adjudged to be "dishonest, deceitful, treacherous" and an "enemy of the working class." It was true that "leadership must be sharply criticized for this petty bourgeois liberalism," allowing this sore to fester. It reflected a "flabbiness of discipline," sure to manifest in other critical arenas—though the ultimate source for this foul-up was "Browder's revisionism." Clearly, he should have been expelled earlier but, as Pettis Perry observed, his being a Negro was a factor in this nonfeasance, given the constant search for Black cadre. Rosser was unrepentant, claiming he had resigned in December 1944 anyway.⁵⁹

Finally, the flummoxed Branton was compelled to pose the query, "What is wrong with being underground," referring to Reds on the lam, "remember the Underground Railroad," a totem for Negroes, though not so much for others then. He too had noticed the "disproportionate number of Negro witnesses...called to testify" by the prosecution, forcing focused attention on racism, as the ruling class prepared for an agonizing, halting retreat from this fraying barricade. Pleading to the jury, he implored, "I don't agree with many of your theories on Marxism-Leninism," referring to his clients, "I don't believe that socialism is inevitable," but he did believe that one should "treat all people with dignity and in that part of your fight, I am with you," for "you are the conscience of America." Still, his expert exegesis of arcane points of democratic centralism and the like may have undermined his attempt to distance himself from "theories of Marxism-Leninism."⁶⁰ This erudite attorney's explanations of the finer points of the "Negro Question," "White Chauvinism"—and particularly the distinctiveness of the "Blanquist," seemed to soar far beyond what would be expected of an attorney simply boning up before trial.⁶¹ When he debated a witness about the pros and

57. Transcript, 25 April 1952, Box 1342, Smith Act Trial Record.

58. Nemmy Sparks to "Dear Comrades," 20 September 1945, Box 1320, Smith Act Trial Record. See *People's World*, 2 June 1970: Sparks was born in London in 1899 and was leader of the party in the Southland from 1945 to 1949, when it was said, "the party there numbered about 5000."

59. Report, 2 July 1946, FI.2, Location 93-04-12, D4L56, P1, CUAC Records. Attached see "Registered Communist Party Members in Los Angeles County...as of [7 June 1951]...shown in the records of the Registrar's Office [Los Angeles]."

60. Transcript, 23 July 1952, Box 1346, Smith Act Trial Record.

61. Transcript, 20 February 1952, Box 1338, Smith Act Trial Record.

cons of the Paris Commune of 1871, a landmark in struggle according to Marxist thinkers, he may have exposed himself unduly.⁶² At one point, a prototypical Southland moment emerged when Branton in mid-colloquy stammered, "I did not know that we had an earthquake. I thought that those were just my knees rocking together this morning."⁶³ He could just as well have quipped that he was rocking from side to side in reaction to the authorities beginning to focus on him because of his all too knowledgeable acquaintance with Marxism-Leninism.

It was a trial within a trial for the defense to sit through the tortured testimony of morally compromised stoolpigeons. Margaret Ames, for example, filed hundreds of reports to the FBI on the inner workings of the CP, receiving \$60 monthly with an incentive to inflate and embroider; her final report was just before the trial commenced.⁶⁴ By way of contrast, Dennis Lancaster, born in Cooper, Texas, in 1920, joined the CP in July 1943, becoming a member of the Hawthorne Club;⁶⁵ his payment from the FBI was only \$25 monthly, then increased to \$40.⁶⁶ This was paltry, retrospectively, since this club, replete with industrial workers, had about 60 members by 1947.⁶⁷ Yet another friendly witness from Hawthorne was Clarence Bryant, who had been in the CP from 1944 to 1953.⁶⁸

Samuel Davenport of 1219 Gordon Street in L.A. sought to implicate, with his spying for the FBI, John Stapp, "organizer of the Hollywood Section" of the CP.⁶⁹ Howard Charles Litt joined the CP at the behest of the FBI in late 1946 and departed in July 1950. This dancer was slim, with grayish hair and attired in a blue suit and gray shirt. Urbane, he attended Yale and graduated from the law school at the University of Southern California and did a stint in the army. He was recruited in September 1946 by the FBI; they "came almost daily for three weeks" to recruit him, he testified, and he joined the CP in April 1947. Yes, he confirmed, the CP sought the "violent" overthrow of the government, but what really seemed to irk him was that the comrades "bled you dry with donations" to various causes. Though kindly Seema Weatherwax, a comrade, gave a gift to his newborn—he turned her name in to the FBI anyway. He joined the Jewish People's Fraternal Order, a fertile hunting ground for an informer, as he ultimately filed "daily reports" to the FBI. Branton grilled him, displaying the skill which made him by far the best interrogator in the courtroom. He argued that it was Litt who contacted

62. Transcript, 8 April 1952, Box 1340, Smith Act Trial Record.

63. Transcript, 23 July 1952, Box 1347, Smith Act Trial Record.

64. Transcript, 8 May 1952, Box 1343, Smith Act Trial Record.

65. Transcript, 30 April 1952, Box 1342, Smith Act Trial Record.

66. Transcript, 1 May 1952, Box 1342, Smith Act Trial Record.

67. Transcript, 25 March 1952, Box 1340, Smith Act Trial Record.

68. Testimony of Clarence Bryant, 26 April 1957, Reel 27, Part I, CPUSA, Subversive Activities Control Board Records.

69. Transcript, 2 May 1952, Box 1342, Smith Act Trial Record.

the FBI—not vice versa—to get help in passing the bar exam to become an attorney. He also was paid in cash.⁷⁰

Besides photographers and journalists, the FBI loved to recruit those like Stephen A. Wereb. After the trial, he testified against John Howard Lawson, Red scribe, before the Subversive Activities Control Board and reported for duty from 2923 West 79th Street. His focus was on the screenwriter, but he added value to his words by adding, "I know him by the name of Herschel [Hursel] Alexander and Franklin Alexander...husband of Lillian Alexander...member of the Watts group of the Communist Party."⁷¹ Alfred A. Butel of 1727½ North Wilcox in Hollywood was born in Warsaw in 1908 and joined the CPUSA in 1931 and became a FBI informant by 1948. He too kept an eye on Lawson: "He was promoting a book he had just finished... 'The Hidden Heritage'" but he also knew Lillian Alexander: "we lived right next door to each other," quite conveniently.⁷²

Lawson—in some ways, the ideological and cultural leader of the CP, if not the nation—was surrounded by what might be called an "anti-fan club." Testifying against him before the Subversive Activities Control Board was Sylvia Richards Bezzerides of posh Woodland Hills: "I write for motion pictures, television and radio," she said, and had joined the CP in New York City in 1937 and left in 1947, but in 1957 recalled that in 1943 Lawson in Santa Monica "took the extreme left position in favor of art as a weapon."⁷³

Wereb owned a typewriter shop for 18 years in Inglewood and was recruited by the FBI in 1944. He became Press Director and Treasurer of the Hawthorne Club and thus had access to membership rolls. He knew screenwriter John Howard Lawson as a result and became acquainted with Harry Hay—titular founder of the modern Queer Rights movement—at a class in 1947. He was in charge of repairing CP typewriters generally, "two and three hours" at a time, "40 or 50 times" all told. His proficiency led to party leader Helen Winter praising him. Born in New Jersey, he raised considerable sums for the CP by selling subscriptions to the party organ—then turning the names over to the FBI, receiving about \$125 monthly as a result. His sideline of selling typewriters to Reds was also profitable. But he too was displeased by what he saw as overweening interference in his personal life by the comrades: "If you were

70. Transcript, 10 and 14 April 1952, Box 1341, Smith Act Trial Record. See also Report from L.A. County CP, 21 June 1948, Box 5, Kutnick Collection: "Lodge of the Jewish People's Fraternal Order, Lodge #51 in Boyle Heights has received an appeal for funds from the 'Vern Smith Defense Committee' a front organization for the California anti-Party leftist renegades, headed by the expelled Harrison George."

71. Testimony of Stephen A. Wereb, 29 April 1957, Part I: CPUSA, Reel 27, Subversive Activities Control Board Records.

72. Testimony of Alfred A. Butel, 29 April 1957, Part I: CPUSA, Reel 27, Subversive Activities Control Board Records.

73. Testimony of Sylvia Richards Bezzerides, 25 April 1957, Part I: CPUSA, Reel 27, Subversive Activities Control Board Records.

married to a non-Communist," he carped, "they put the pressure on you, that you either divorce your wife...or divorce the party...I was given that choice."⁷⁴

The NAACP, in a sense, was presented a like-minded choice—and they chose to "divorce" the CP—to which they were never formally betrothed but, especially in San Francisco, with whom they had cohabited fruitfully through the good offices of Dr. Carleton Goodlett, the old friend of William Patterson. Even before "D-Day," 17 May 1954, the moment when the high court moved to invalidate Jim Crow, the Association's West Coast operative Franklin Williams demanded that the Communist newspaper stop covering their activities since "our policy...precludes our sending any news releases or photographs" to their mailbox.⁷⁵ Even Henry Lee Moon, national director of Public Relations for the NAACP and no slouch in propagating anticommunism, was taken aback by this démarche. "I have always extended to the 'Daily Worker,'" he said by way of rebuke, "the same courtesy which I extend to reporters of the [New York] 'Times.'"⁷⁶ Al Richmond, the CP editor, told Williams he had "no quarrel" with his group but was bent on confronting the presumed mutual foe: "McCarthyism, Jim Crow and reaction." This claim fell on deaf ears.⁷⁷

As early as 1947, Roy Wilkins of the Association warned, "We know that the San Francisco branches have been far over to the left,"⁷⁸ though Dr. Goodlett's elevated class status made it difficult to undermine him. But this left-wing trend ascended far beyond the proclivities of a single medic. How else to explain why the branch executive voted unanimously to endorse a subscription drive by the CP newspaper?⁷⁹ Apparently, this leftward tilt did not prevent the fogbound city from, as was said, "leading the West Coast region in the number of members reported," 1875 all told, with Alameda County across the bay, second with 1821.⁸⁰ When founder Du Bois was purged from the Association in 1948 on undisguised Cold War/Red Scare grounds, Dr. Goodlett forcefully informed Walter White that it was the "unanimous wish of the Executive Board and members" that the "dismissal of Dr. Du Bois be reconsidered."⁸¹ The L.A. branch also did not elude controversy. It was also in 1947 that Leon Steward protested his dismissal as Acting Executive Secretary.⁸²

This turn to the right did not improve dwindling NAACP fortunes in San Diego. Lynn Akerstein, secretary of the branch, acknowledged "little evidence of a close working relationship between the local branch and the National Office,"

74. Transcript, 21, 24, 25 and 26 March 1952, Box 1340, Smith Act Trial Record.

75. Franklin Williams to CP, 5 March 1954, Carton 71, NAACP Papers-UCB.

76. Henry Lee Moon to Franklin Williams, 19 April 1954, Carton 3, NAACP Papers-UCB.

77. Al Richmond to Franklin Williams, 29 March 1954, Carton 71, NAACP Papers-UCB.

78. Roy Wilkins to Noah Griffin, 14 April 1947, Carton 93, NAACP Papers-UCB.

79. Minutes, 5 June 1947, Carton 93, NAACP Papers-UCB.

80. Newsletter, 23 June 1947, Carton 93, NAACP Papers-UCB.

81. Dr. Goodlett to Walter White, 1 November 1948, Carton 93, NAACP Papers-UCB.

82. Leon Steward to NAACP Board, 16 July 1947, Carton 82, NAACP Papers-UCB.

married to a non-Communist," he carped, "they put the pressure on you, that you either divorce your wife...or divorce the party...I was given that choice."⁷⁴

The NAACP, in a sense, was presented a like-minded choice—and they chose to "divorce" the CP—to which they were never formally betrothed but, especially in San Francisco, with whom they had cohabited fruitfully through the good offices of Dr. Carleton Goodlett, the old friend of William Patterson. Even before "D-Day," 17 May 1954, the moment when the high court moved to invalidate Jim Crow, the Association's West Coast operative Franklin Williams demanded that the Communist newspaper stop covering their activities since "our policy...precludes our sending any news releases or photographs" to their mailbox.⁷⁵ Even Henry Lee Moon, national director of Public Relations for the NAACP and no slouch in propagating anticommunism, was taken aback by this démarche. "I have always extended to the 'Daily Worker,'" he said by way of rebuke, "the same courtesy which I extend to reporters of the [New York] 'Times.'"⁷⁶ Al Richmond, the CP editor, told Williams he had "no quarrel" with his group but was bent on confronting the presumed mutual foe: "McCarthyism, Jim Crow and reaction." This claim fell on deaf ears.⁷⁷

As early as 1947, Roy Wilkins of the Association warned, "We know that the San Francisco branches have been far over to the left,"⁷⁸ though Dr. Goodlett's elevated class status made it difficult to undermine him. But this left-wing trend ascended far beyond the proclivities of a single medic. How else to explain why the branch executive voted unanimously to endorse a subscription drive by the CP newspaper?⁷⁹ Apparently, this leftward tilt did not prevent the fogbound city from, as was said, "leading the West Coast region in the number of members reported," 1875 all told, with Alameda County across the bay, second with 1821.⁸⁰ When founder Du Bois was purged from the Association in 1948 on undisguised Cold War/Red Scare grounds, Dr. Goodlett forcefully informed Walter White that it was the "unanimous wish of the Executive Board and members" that the "dismissal of Dr. Du Bois be reconsidered."⁸¹ The L.A. branch also did not elude controversy. It was also in 1947 that Leon Steward protested his dismissal as Acting Executive Secretary.⁸²

This turn to the right did not improve dwindling NAACP fortunes in San Diego. Lynn Akerstein, secretary of the branch, acknowledged "little evidence of a close working relationship between the local branch and the National Office,"

74. Transcript, 21, 24, 25 and 26 March 1952, Box 1340, Smith Act Trial Record.

75. Franklin Williams to CP, 5 March 1954, Carton 71, NAACP Papers-UCB.

76. Henry Lee Moon to Franklin Williams, 19 April 1954, Carton 3, NAACP Papers-UCB.

77. Al Richmond to Franklin Williams, 29 March 1954, Carton 71, NAACP Papers-UCB.

78. Roy Wilkins to Noah Griffin, 14 April 1947, Carton 93, NAACP Papers-UCB.

79. Minutes, 5 June 1947, Carton 93, NAACP Papers-UCB.

80. Newsletter, 23 June 1947, Carton 93, NAACP Papers-UCB.

81. Dr. Goodlett to Walter White, 1 November 1948, Carton 93, NAACP Papers-UCB.

82. Leon Steward to NAACP Board, 16 July 1947, Carton 82, NAACP Papers-UCB.

while "our membership campaign in 1947 was dismally unsuccessful"; worse, "branch treasury is at a record low."⁸³ The press reported that despite the anticommunist accommodation, civil rights concessions had yet to flow: By 1948 "one third of restaurants [in San Diego] discriminated against the colored."⁸⁴ Yet simultaneously there continued to be overheated references by leaders to "Communist infiltration with the [San Diego] branch."⁸⁵ By 1952 Gordon Stafford, vice president of the branch, was struck by the "apathetic city" that was "San Diego...most of our members read only our conservative Republican newspaper and/or comic books. Very few members get *Crisis*," the NAACP's own moderate journal.⁸⁶

Santa Barbara emulated its southern doppelgänger. Gloster Current took time away from purging Reds to lament the "inactivity of the NAACP in Santa Barbara" as of July 1948.⁸⁷ The branch, he said with sadness, "has failed to function and is at the present time completely inactive," which "has led us to create another organization." Yet his local correspondent exposed the limitations of the anticommunist consensus when she chose to contribute to a CRC case in behalf of Rosa Lee Ingram, a persecuted Georgian who fought back valiantly against racist molestation.⁸⁸ Would that mean that she was now ideologically suspect, and might that serve to explain the inactivity of the branch?⁸⁹

Yet with the arrival of Franklin Williams, parachuted into the state to serve above local leadership, whatever imagined leftist policy that existed began to shift locally, but especially nationally, even more to the right.

At their 44th convention in St. Louis in 1953, the group assailed the CP—along with unions expelled from the CIO, the left-leaning federation, and the National Negro Labor Council which had ties to both.⁹⁰ At their 1954 convention this vengeful policy was reaffirmed in yet another vitriolic attack on the CP.⁹¹

The NNLC, which brought together left-wing union leaders and rank-and-file, was targeted by the state. Elisabeth Williams joined the CP in 1945 or thereabouts and eventually began to spy for the FBI surveilling the NNLC, receiving \$20 monthly as early as 1954 and at times \$40.⁹²

83. Lynn Akerstein to Gloster Current, 2 February 1948, Part II, Box C19, NAACP Papers-UCB.

84. *San Diego Comet*, ca. February 1948, Part II, Box C19, NAACP Papers-UCB.

85. N.W. Griffin, Regional Secretary to Walter White, 18 March 1948, Part II, Box C19., NAACP Papers-UCB.

86. Gordon Stafford to Gloster Current, 4 January 1952, Part II, Box C19, NAACP Papers-UCB.

87. Gloster Current to Gladys Fouche, 323 Elizabeth Street, Santa Barbara, Part II, Box C21, NAACP Papers-UCB.

88. Gladys Fouche to Walter White, 14 June 1948, Part II, Box C21, NAACP Papers-UCB.

89. On the Ingram case, Horne, *Communist Front?*, 193-202.

90. Resolutions, 27 June 1953, Carton 71, NAACP Papers-UCB.

91. Resolutions, 29 June-4 July 1954, Dallas, Carton 33, NAACP Papers-UCB.

92. Testimony of Elisabeth Williams, 8 November 1962, Part I: CPUSA, Reel 27, Subversive Activities Control Board Records.

These left-led unions led by Harry Bridges and the Communist Ferdinand Smith, were in the vanguard of fighting racism on the docks so, again, it was antithetical to the NAACP's strategic goals when the group sought to forge alliances with unions not so aggressive on this front. Thus, Franklin Williams told Ed Turner, vice president of the Seafarers' International—possibly the worst of the lot—in full opportunist mode, that “we would welcome nothing more than to have non-Communist dominated unions representing all workers on the waterfront here in the West.”⁹³

On the one hand, this was understandable. Barely anticipated anti-Jim Crow concessions seemed to be flowing now, and the forces that propelled them demanded as a virtual quid pro quo that the left—even stars like Robeson and Du Bois—be boycotted. Relatively unnoticed was the long-term impact on the political ecosystem of purging the left. Would not this give a boost to neo-fascism in the long run? Was it not disturbing that Smith Act prosecution witnesses included unrepentant fascists?⁹⁴ Should not the NAACP have objected to the presence at the Smith Act trial of what defendant Richmond termed the prosecution's “star witness,” speaking of John Lautner, who had blood on his hands from his stint in Hungary?⁹⁵

The NAACP would have benefited from consorting with Pettis Perry, for example, who in the early 1950s was linking the struggle against “White Chauvinism” with the “Struggle for Peace” as he linked Negroes to similar valiant battles in China and India.⁹⁶

Actually, disturbing trends were evident in the short term too, for it was in 1952 that the left-leaning union, Marine Cooks and Stewards, underlined the perturbations unleashed by the “Christian Nationalistic Party,” a vehicle of the bigot Gerald L.K. Smith, which planned to run the fervently anticommunist Jack Tenney of California as their vice presidential candidate.⁹⁷ Simultaneously the NAACP began to be deluged by a tidal wave of hate mail from so-called “American Nationalist” circles, much of it with an Inglewood address.⁹⁸ Doubtlessly, a propellant for this bile was the latest household appliance: television. Not coincidentally, as the war on the Korean peninsula came to resemble a Cuisinart blender, the local station KNBC broadcast in L.A. during

93. Franklin Williams to Ed Turner, 24 November 1954, Part II, Box A343, NAACP Papers-UCB.

94. *People's World*, 27 February 1952.

95. Richmond, *Long View*, 334. On an earlier trial of radical journalists, see 1849 Trial of Karl Marx, editor-in-chief of *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* and Friedrich Engels of the Editorial Board, Box 359, Norman Leonard Papers.

96. Pettis Perry, “White Chauvinism and the Struggle for Peace,” 1952, Box 69b, Dorothy Healey Papers, CSU Long Beach.

97. *MCS Voice*, 19 September 1952, Box 419, Norman Leonard Papers.

98. Hate Mail, 1950s, Carton 69, NAACP Papers-UCB.

prime time (7:45 to 8 p.m.) a "fourteen week series" arguing that there was "no greater menace...ever faced [in] our modern world" than the CP.⁹⁹

Don Wheeldin, a Negro carpenter and occasional correspondent for the CP journal, was hassled by his union even though his injured shoulder compromised his livelihood, and the union placed him on trial. That he was on the editorial board of *The Defender*, organ of the L.A. chapter of the Civil Rights Congress, did not bode well.¹⁰⁰

Unsurprisingly, the CP, in the aftermath of the Smith Act trial, was driven into a cloak-and-dagger existence. To some it hardly seemed worthwhile to do anything but denounce them. Yes, the affiliated Labor Youth League had 300 members in L.A. in the early 1950s, but for years, according to Healey, the overall Party leadership of the besieged radicals were compelled to hold "secret" meetings with "underground leadership," which convened after switching from one car to another before reaching a shrouded destination.¹⁰¹ The "plan of work" for the once formidable CP in L.A. stretching from "June 15, 1953 to December 31, 1953," was "done by underground leadership," said Healey.¹⁰² This was not easy. Daniel Scarletto, a carpenter, who was in what was described as a "Mexican Concentration Club" in El Sereno, was part of the underground for a while—and was an agent for the authorities. Briggs Hopson of 2803 West 152nd Street in Gardena was an "undercover agent" for the FBI and testified triumphantly that Healey complained that his agency "had her under observation and had been hounding her...they sat across the street in front of her house and watched and she couldn't even go the market without them following her."¹⁰³ Cyril William Fischbach of Montebello too testified, "I was an undercover agent for the FBI," though—he asserted—never a Communist.¹⁰⁴

And, yes, the trusty erstwhile Communist screenwriter Dalton Trumbo demonstrated that his side of the class barricade still exuded influence when his searing analysis of what came to be called McCarthyism—*The Time of the Toad*—had a print run of 45,000 during the dark days of 1950, a phenomenon noted in elevated climes in Sacramento. But the NAACP chose—objectively—to pursue an alliance with Hollywood executives, who had exhibited little or no sensitivity

99. Report on KNBC, 4 April 1952, Carton 71, NAACP Papers-UCB.

100. *Daily People's World*, 27 March 1951 and 8 October 1951, Investigative Name Series #4, Box 1.18-74 9 E3 3-17-3, Record Group 233, HUAC Records.

101. Dorothy Healey, Oral History.

102. Plan of Work, 1953, Box 58, Dorothy Healey Papers, CSU Long Beach.

103. Testimony of Daniel Scarletto and Briggs Hopson, 26 April 1957, Reel 27, Part 1, CPUSA, Subversive Activities Control Board Records.

104. Testimony of Cyril William Fischbach, 26 April 1957, Part I: CPUSA, Reel 27, *Records of the Subversive Activities Control Board*.

to antiracism, rather than pursue the alternative path of bulwarking allies like Trumbo and Lawson.¹⁰⁵

The NAACP also turned its back on Herbert Biberman, yet another left-wing director; his *Salt of the Earth* is today viewed as a classic and he provided bail for Smith Act defendant Ernest Otto Fox. Soon the NAACP was under siege in Dixie and, perhaps, had they extended solidarity to their left, they too could have been bulwarked.¹⁰⁶ There was significant protest against the Smith Act trial, for example, but one searches in vain for evidence of NAACP participation.¹⁰⁷

As shall be seen, it was left to the BPP to cultivate Trumbo and those like him—Jane Fonda, Donald Sutherland, Marlon Brando, Jean Seberg, and others—rather than leave them twisting slowly in the wind, à la the NAACP.

Predictably, the situation was worse than it appeared. NAACP leaders thought they were being slick and sophisticated by hitching their wagon to the Cold War star. Thus, Roy Wilkins informed “Dear Loren” Miller he was “dickering” with Secretary of State Dean Acheson to appear in a Hollywood extravaganza. The starry-eyed Wilkins sought “movie stars...top names but naturally” those “known as liberals”—“do not want any out and out lefties,” naturally. Even “Clarence Muse or Louise Beavers” were to be shunned, with Wilkins not even seeking to “ask advice” since “neither one likes Walter White personally.”¹⁰⁸ On board, Miller replied promptly, advising that “you should communicate with Ronald Reagan, Melvin Douglas and others of that character who are known to be liberals”—Reagan soon to be an epitome of conservatism—“but who are not too left”; then he added, “We have a large Jewish population here,” so list Ralph Bunche,¹⁰⁹ the Negro U.N. official in the news for his instrumental role in the creation of Israel after his supervisor, the Swedish Count Folke Bernadotte, was assassinated by ultra-Zionists. Please come, White pleaded to Acheson underlining what a blow would be delivered to socialist fortunes.¹¹⁰ That balloon was punctured when Acheson’s aide—and future Secretary of State Dean Rusk—poured cold water on the idea of appearing alongside Bunche in L.A., the latter’s hometown.¹¹¹

Consistent with this cockamamie policy was the NAACP’s decision to withdraw its 25 pickets from a revival of the celluloid calamity, *The Birth of a Nation*, when 60 pickets of the Communist-tied American Youth for Democracy

105. Dalton Trumbo, *The Time of the Toad: A Study of Inquisition in America*, West Nyack, N.Y.: Journeyman Press, 1982 [originally published 1950] in F586, Location D4161, P2, CUAC Records. See also V.J. Jerome, “The Negro in Hollywood Films,” 1950, Box 69a, Dorothy Healey Papers, CSU Long Beach.

106. *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, 4 September 1952.

107. See voluminous file of Smith Act trial protests, 1951-1952, Box 36, Screened Files.

108. Roy Wilkins to “Dear Loren” Miller, 6 April 1949, Part II, Box A38, NAACP Papers-UCB.

109. Loren Miller to Roy Wilkins, 12 April 1949, Part II, Box A38, NAACP Papers-UCB.

110. Walter White to Dean Acheson, 25 March 1949, Part II, Box A39, NAACP Papers-UCB.

111. Dean Rusk to Walter White, 28 March 1949, Part II, Box A39, NAACP Papers-UCB.

showed up.¹¹² White did manage to complain to an anticommunist ally with New York's Liberal Party that this movie accounted for a recent resurgence of the KKK—but this was much too little, much too late.¹¹³ In a maneuver emblematic of this star-crossed era, as this slime on the silver screen spread like an out-of-control chancre to Japan, Indonesia, Taiwan, the Philippines, Malaya, Singapore, Thailand and Hong Kong, White was reduced to the hoary chestnut that the exhibiting of this movie "would benefit communism" and, oh yes, it was also a "gross libel on colored peoples."¹¹⁴

The strategic line of the NAACP, embracing anticommunism, was antithetical to their overall goals. William Hastie, who was to become a federal judge and was close to the NAACP leadership, sensed this when he spoke at Second Baptist Church, 2412 Griffith Avenue, before the Smith Act trial: "Loyalty investigations of white persons have repeatedly included inquiries whether the person being investigated associates with Negroes or has Negro visitors in his home": "friendship with Negroes is identified with Communism," and, yes, if the branch had one Communist, all would be branded as Red. Rather than combat this insanity, the NAACP surrendered to it.¹¹⁵ This compromised their otherwise laudable campaign against school segregation in Riverside, El Centro and Pasadena.¹¹⁶

This mismatch between strategy and attaining goals was not grasped by the NAACP leadership. It seemed like a sweet deal at the time to throw overboard the likes of Robeson and Du Bois and then bask in the mellowness of anti-Jim Crow. Yet, there were signs early on that something was awry. It was left to Wilkins in early 1952, as Dwight D. Eisenhower was in cruise control to the White House, that he contacted Walter Gordon, the old buddy of Governor Warren—soon to be Chief Justice and the juridical architect of anti-Jim Crow, then a speed bump in Ike's path to the GOP nomination. "People [in] the East, especially Negroes do not know much about Governor Warren," he remarked with barely disguised disdain. "They know that the FEPC [Fair Employment Practices Committee] law in Warren's administration could have done something about FEPC before the very damaging referendum was held" and "[he] has not been too generous in his appointments of Negroes to office"; and his "failure to name Negro judges" was unacceptable. Wilkins sensed, though did not articulate, that the "sinister" ultra-rightist forces then ascending had something to do with the retreat of the left that he had helped to orchestrate, and they "would strike down nearly all civil rights provisions and send Negroes back behind Jim Crow fences." True. "You are a close friend of Governor Warren," he pleaded to this appointee to the Department

112. Undated Clipping, ca. 1947, Part II, Box A274, NAACP Papers-UCB.

838. Walter White to Harry Brandt, 11 October 1947, Part II, Box A274, NAACP Papers-UCB.

114. Telegram from Walter White, 6 December 1951, Part II, Box A274, NAACP Papers-UCB.

115. Speech by William Hastie, 13 July 1949, Part II, Box A39, NAACP Papers-UCB.

116. Press Release, 15 October 1953, Part II, Box A226, NAACP Papers-UCB.

of Corrections,¹¹⁷ soon to be over-supplied with Negro men, but clientelism and personal lobbying were no substitute for a militant movement with global connections that Robeson represented. Gordon, who now was the unofficial chairman of what would later be termed the "Prison-Industrial Complex," was hardly capable of providing requisite assurances.¹¹⁸

When the California Un-American Activities Committee ululated in 1954 that there were "hundreds of [so-called Communist] front groups functioning" in the Golden State up to 1945 but "now there are relatively few," the NAACP should have donned sackcloth and ashes; but instead, there was grim satisfaction.¹¹⁹

For the Association could claim a share of the credit for this turnabout, to its everlasting shame. Just as they had purged Du Bois in 1948 nationally as this witch-hunt was launched, in L.A. by 1954 the knives were out for Herbert Simmons, then in the influential post of "Chairman of the Legal Redress Committee of the Los Angeles NAACP," as Franklin Williams put it, and thus positioned to tackle aggressively the growing epidemic of police misconduct which was to trigger the Watts Revolt of 1965 and the founding of the BPP a scant year later. Instead, a sword was jabbed into his backside as he was forced to walk the plank. "We have just 'put out' of the Berkeley chapter's Board another widely known Communist," Williams said chortlingly. "We intend to do the same with Cleophus Brown, President of the National Negro Labor Council in L.A."¹²⁰ Gloster Current, yet another brutal infighter in the NAACP elite, warned Wilkins that "left wingers" were seeking to "take over the leadership of branches n Berkeley, Richmond, Monrovia, Los Angeles" and elsewhere.¹²¹

Walter White was reduced to a discreet collaboration with the FBI in order to effectuate this purge. "Very confidentially," he told Williams, his fellow master of the purge, "Lou Nichols of the FBI told Clarence [Mitchell, D.C. lobbyist] and me" about the purported CP role in the ranks.¹²²

Although talented Black lawyers willing to sacrifice on behalf of the struggle were at a premium, the NAACP did not hesitate to sabotage those so inclined—if they were insufficiently anticommunist. Residing at 4316 4th Avenue, Simmons, for example, was not shy about collaborating with the Civil Rights Congress, nor the National Lawyers Guild, nor the Independent Progressive Party. He even had the temerity to welcome Du Bois, then shunned by the NAACP, the organization he helped to found. He was listed by the state as a Party member as early as 1946

117. Roy Wilkins to Walter Gordon, 29 February 1952, Part II, Box A472, NAACP Papers-UCB.

118. Walter Gordon to Roy Wilkins, 18 February 1952, Part II, Box A472, NAACP Papers-UCB.

119. Hearings, July 1954, Eighth Report Un-American Activities in California, 1955, Sacramento, 1955, SFSU (abbrev. Eighth Report).

120. Franklin Williams to Alfred Baker Lewis, 2 February 1954, Carton 3, NAACP Papers-UCB.

121. Gloster Current to Roy Wilkins, 12 January 1955, Carton 3, NAACP Papers-UCB.

122. Walter Williams to Franklin Williams, 19 January 1955, Carton 3, NAACP Papers-UCB.

and, as of 1953, one of 37 Reds in the county who were simultaneously part of the NAACP.¹²³

Also viewed suspiciously was Rayfield Lundy of 1836 East 122nd Street in L.A. A Negro born in Georgia in 1916, he too was an activist attorney in the style of Branton and Simmons and, said an agent, "has supported the Civil Rights Congress and...has spoken at meeting[s] of the Progressive Party." He too had the gall to sponsor a Du Bois lecture at 4016 South Central Avenue and, suspiciously, his 1940 "Lincoln coupe" was spotted parked near a meeting in honor of the Communist Doxey Wilkerson.¹²⁴

Then Williams was subpoenaed to appear before the California Un-American Activities Committee¹²⁵—though doubtlessly he would have volunteered for this weighty attack and did not disappoint when he unleashed a bitter philippic scorning the CP in no uncertain terms.¹²⁶ Naturally, the Association was missing in action when, quite dangerously, Black Communist Claude Lightfoot, was detained for simple membership in his party,¹²⁷ just as they shunned mass action to derail Smith Act prosecutions¹²⁸ and ordinances circumscribing the circulations of mere handbills¹²⁹ and efforts to bollix invasive grand juries in L.A.¹³⁰ There was a kind of bottom-up process whereby initiatives to handcuff Reds began at the city and county level, then moved to Sacramento. In 1947 county supervisors launched an investigation of Reds with loyalty oaths prescribed, then were mimicked in the capital, before ricocheting back to the school board. This was more than just a local or regional concern, however, since one analyst found that the county "leads the nation in upholding the right to require that public employees cooperate" with investigators. The NAACP, with grassroots and statewide reach, was uniquely suited to confront this dragnet but instead tended to cooperate with it.¹³¹

Similarly, the NAACP chose to distance itself from many skilled attorneys of the left, including the future BPP counsel, Charles Garry. In 1953 he defended with brio, the Negro Silas Stanley, the question being: Can Communists, as a journal put it, hold "important posts in public and private utilities in Bay Area."¹³²

123. File on Herbert Simmons, Jr., 1 September 1955, including articles in *People's World*, 28 October 1949 and 10 October 1949; and *Los Angeles Daily News*, 15 May 1950; Leaflet, 14 June 1951, F2.400, Box 10, D04159 93-04-12, CUAC Records.

124. File on Rayfield Lundy, 7 October 1955, Box 10, F2.400, D04159, 93-04-12, CUAC Records.

125. Subpoena, 23 November 1956, Carton 3, NAACP Papers-UCB.

126. Testimony of Franklin Williams, 10 December 1956, Carton 3, NAACP Papers-UCB.

127. Claude Lightfoot Defense, 18 December 1954, Box 22, CRC Papers.

128. On Mass Campaigns against Smith Act Trial-L.A., 1951-1952, Box 13, CRC Papers.

129. *People's World*, 13 November 1951, Box 11, CRC Papers.

130. Motions to Dismiss Grand Jury, 1949, Box 13, CRC Papers.

131. Report by Harold W. Kennedy, Counsel of L.A. County, 19 August 1964, Series III, Box 11, Gilbert Benjamin Papers.

132. *San Francisco News*, 10 August 1953.

If not, would the next case pose the ticklish question as to whether NAACP members could hold important posts of various sorts.

The CP was down but not out. This was exposed in early 1953 when 800 appeared at the Embassy Auditorium for a memorial to the departed Stalin: There were "more Negroes than usual," was the monitor's glum evaluation. Almost \$800 was collected, and old standbys were present: Schneiderman, Dobbs, "Slim" Connelly, Franklin Alexander—and misogynistically, the "tramp that works for Lou Schwartz."¹³³

May Day 1953 was like old times. A thousand people showed up at the Embassy Auditorium at 9th and Grand—albeit "very few Negroes" was the happy coda by the agent present. John Pittman, the Negro Communist writer, spoke. He "can be very easily mistaken for a member of the white race" was the acidulous comment. \$1000 was collected.¹³⁴

In July 1953 the monitor returned to the Embassy Auditorium. This time there were "very few Negroes" at the Communist affair, where Civil Rights Congress faithful Margie Robinson and Emil Freed were gathering signatures on a petition for freedom for the jailed Negro Wesley Robert Wells, whose travails anticipated the prisoners' rights movement sparked by the BPP. To that point, the party organ had reached 75% of its fund-raising goal, not bad given the political climate. Peggy Dennis, a party leader and spouse of chieftain Eugene Dennis spoke. The monitor, Thomas Cavett, spotted in the crowd Connelly, Healey, and Franklin Alexander.¹³⁵

Typically, the NAACP hedged on the Wells case; it was "complicated," said Franklin Williams. "Officially our position is to say nothing as in our position it does not involve a clear question of race. On the other hand, a man's life is at stake, so who are we to be telling other groups not to act in his behalf?"¹³⁶ So Wells was left to languish behind bars. Filling the breach was Charles Garry, soon to gain renown as the BPP's primary counsel, but by the early 1950s he was known for his vigorous defense of Wells and fellow prisoner Caryl Chessman. The former, said the wizened counsel, was "the first Black Panther." The legal strategies he deployed there, it was said, were an "important antecedent to arguments later made by radical activists in the late 1960s."¹³⁷

Ironically, the CRC continued to function as a kind of flypaper, rallying forces—and attracting comrades and fellow travelers to a site where they could be surveilled. That was the admission of their San Francisco leader, Ida Rothstein, who encountered the spy—and CP expellee—Anita Bell Schneider: "I met her at

133. Report, 16 March 1953, F3, Location 93-04-12, D4159, P3, CUAC Records.

134. Report, 1 May 1953, F1.2, Location 93-04-12, D4L56, P1, CUAC Records.

135. Report, 31 July 1953, F3, Location 9304-12, D4159, P3, CUAC Records.

136. Franklin Williams to Herbert Hill, 18 March 1954, Part II, Box A219, NAACP Papers-UCB.

137. Theodore Hamm, *Rebel and a Cause: Caryl Chessman and the Politics of the Death Penalty in Postwar California, 1948-1974*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001, 99.

the Civil Rights Congress National Executive Board meeting in Chicago in 1952."¹³⁸

By December 1953 the Labor Youth League was assembling in Westwood, at 574 Hilgard Avenue, near UCLA. Another Smith Act defendant, Henry Steinberg, was the moderator, and a reporter found an "overflow crowd of approximately 150." Yet there were discordant notes that were to sound loudly in coming years. License plates and car models were taken down by an agent, while the troubling matter of the June 1953 execution of the supposed atomic spies Julius and Ethel Rosenberg pervaded like a toxic plume.¹³⁹ The CP had weathered many a storm, but this death penalty case was an ominous sign that Jewish-Americans, who had been a foundation of its militancy, either accept the anti-bigotry emanations then emerging and the constructed image of "liberal democracy" or run the risk of facing the ultimate retribution. This was just one more means of forcing radicals to swallow liberal bromides.

Ironically, a part of this forced process took place in a sensitive arena. It was in 1953 that State Senator Jack Tenney, a seemingly eternal besieger of the left, excoriated Zionism, which "may be said to be as un-American as Communism or Fascism" in that it "threatens not only the American people as a whole but American Jewry in particular." He was aghast at the presence of a "network of Zionist espionage and propaganda organizations [that] operate within the United States and throughout the world," acting as an "international menace." As for the "Zionist claim to Palestine," the verdict was simple: "unfounded."¹⁴⁰ Eventually, as part of the accommodation with many Jewish Americans, and to divert more of this group into nationalism and away from Marxist-inflected internationalism, anti-Zionism was to be deep-sixed—at least for a while—by the ultra-right.

The Rosenberg executions were far from being the only setback, though, dialectically, June 1953 also witnessed one of the largest demonstrations ever in L.A. during this era—"thousands" said Healey, driven to the streets by the gruesomeness of their slaying.¹⁴¹ Still, looking back, Healey recalled ruefully that many within the CP in 1951 concluded that fascism was "imminent...a policy which placed most of the leadership of the Party underground for five years. One year later, in 1952, the California leadership which met daily in the L.A. County Jail as Smith Act defendants, decided that the estimate was wrong," but it "took three long years before the policy was reversed." Then referring to the Browder-Duclos flap, she wondered "why did we have to wait for a French Communist to

138. Report, 30 April 1957, "Brownell v. CEDC," Part I: CPUSA, Reel 27, Subversive Activities Control Board Records.

139. Report, 2 December 1953, and *Daily Bruin*, 2 December 1953 in F2.404, Labor Youth League, Box 10, D04159 93-04-12, CUAC Records.

140. Jack Tenney, "Zion's Fifth Column," Tujunga, Calif., 1953, Series II, Box 12, Gilbert Benjamin Papers.

141. Dorothy Healey, Oral History.

tell us we were following a revisionist policy."¹⁴² (Oleta Yates recalled ever sharper attacks on the "leftist" view on the CP fringe that characterized the Pacific War, where Japan was seeking to replace British, Dutch and U.S. colonizers, as inter-imperialist.)¹⁴³

Healey could have asked why there was this deification of Jefferson despite his numerous debilities, but that would have led prematurely into a discussion of settler colonialism (wherein class collaboration and right opportunism inhered) for which the ranks clearly were not ready, and perpetually contributed to misestimates of domestic forces and, ultimately, misjudging the prospects for fascism. Ironically, this earlier misestimate of the prospects for U.S. fascism barely intruded when it was raised sharply by the BPP and particularly George Jackson, by 1969-1970.

In any event, the hothouse atmosphere of being thrust together behind bars impelled alteration of long-held views. Defendant Richmond at first had a negative view of "Slim" Connelly, finding him "irascible, contentious, stubborn, overbearing" and the poster child for "bureaucracy and incompetence." But as jail mates rubbing shoulders with him regularly, he changed his mind. It also appeared that jailtime sharpened Richmond's analysis of his state's politics, especially concerning the longstanding north-south cleavage, reflecting "uneven development" in that even after population and wealth shifted southward, the preexisting dominance of the north stretching back to the U.S. takeover from Mexico, continued to obtain. The tenure of Berkeley and Stanford as flagship campuses; the financial domination of the Bank of America and Wells Fargo; the dominance of northern politicians in the congressional delegation and even statewide—all were part of this trend, which also impacted the CP, as decisions continued to be shaped in the north even as power should have shifted southward.¹⁴⁴

Shifting more decision-making southward may have foiled those surveilling the CP too, for these agents often flocked north of the Tehachapi mountain range. This proliferation included Lulu Mae Thompson of Lathrop, who was part of the CP beginning in 1953—before testifying against them in 1957—about her machinations in Sacramento and the San Joaquin Valley. Both she and her spouse had been on the FBI payroll for years:¹⁴⁵ she received handsome sums monthly for almost a decade.¹⁴⁶

142. Healey Report, 4 April 1969, Box 21 A, Dorothy Healey Papers, CSU Long Beach.

143. Transcript, 24 June 1952, Box 1345, Smith Act Trial Record.

144. Richmond, *Long View*, 332, 333.

145. Testimony of Lulu Mae Thompson, 6 May 1957, Part I, CPUSA, Reel 25, Subversive Activities Control Board Records.

146. Testimony of Lulu Mae Thompson, 13 November 1962, Part I, CPUSA, Reel 25, Subversive Activities Control Board Records.

Thus, as the Rosenberg execution demonstrated, the authorities did not rest recumbent as the CP—it was thought—seemed to have remained unchecked altogether by Smith Act trials. Instead, poisonous gossip was unshackled. Elizabeth Barlow dumped her spouse for James McFadden, it was said. A well-known Communist journalist “frequently propositioned Negro women to go to bed with him while trying to sell them” the party newspaper. As for Jessica Mitford, the Oakland Communist, “this comrade cannot be trusted” and is also a “Black Chauvinist” especially where Buddy Green is concerned. “Buddy can do no wrong and is an excellent bedroom companion, according to [Decca, her nickname]. She is taking Buddy’s affection away from his Negro wife, Mary.” As for Emma Coe, she was deemed to be a “semi nymphomaniac” while Roscoe Proctor “left his Negro wife and two small children...why did he leave his wife? So that he could sleep with any [and] every *white* woman who would get in bed with him.”¹⁴⁷

Of course, this raw sewage should be read cautiously at minimum, or dismissed altogether. Yet, as the attorneys say, it does reflect the distorted state of mind of the expounders and also anticipates even more outrageous assertions soon to be deployed against the BPP. It was as if the CP was a warmup joust preparing agents for the ugliness of suppressing the BPP. Thus by 1953, despite the apparent setback of Smith Act convictions, there were a listed 40 “agents who have been operating in L.A.”,¹⁴⁸ according to official sources—while the left retaliated by circulating a list of license plate numbers “used by the FBI and police agencies.”¹⁴⁹

Leo Branton was not cowed by his roughening experience at the trial. Before the state Un-American Activities Committee, Frank Wilkinson became a vector in 1953 joining hysteria about anticommunism and construction of more public housing—a surrogate for anti-Blackness. He was born in Michigan in 1914 and arrived out West by 1925, where he matriculated at Beverly Hills High School and UCLA and, if CUAC could be believed, he toiled alongside the CP-initiated National Negro Congress.

But, in short, Branton compounded the issue and stole the show with his adept defense there of Adina Williamson. Perhaps given its location in Sacramento, the trackers paid significant attention to Reds in the Bay Area and especially Mitford, listed at 730 59th Street in Oakland and 675 Jean Street there, while her group,

147. “CP News,” 3 (No. 7, August 1953), Box 4, Kutnick Collection. Here and elsewhere, I cite this raw gossip as a warning and reminder to future generations of strugglers as to how our opponents can weaponize what may have been innocent human interactions.

148. “List of Agents,” ca. 1953, Box 4, Kutnick Collection.

149. Undated list, Box 4, Kutnick Collection.

the Civil Rights Congress, was sited at its beehive at 1740 University Avenue in Berkeley.¹⁵⁰

Seemingly inspired by CUAC, HUAC [House Un-American Activities Committee]—the daddy of them all, based in Washington—brought its roadshow to Los Angeles. "Communist activities among Professional Groups," principally attorneys, was a focus in 1952, shortly after the Smith Act trial concluded, as the left reeled. Branton burnished his profile by appearing alongside a witness, Jack Tenner. He was in rarefied company in that former state Attorney General Robert Kenny showed up with witness John Walcott Porter, a Negro from Pasadena. An attorney since 1935, Porter had toiled within the bowels of the National Labor Relations Board, then the Department of Justice, then the Denver headquarters of the Office of Price Administration, before winding up in San Francisco. As if he were somehow responsible, he was questioned sharply about what had become a commonplace in the Southland: the "bombing of a respected Negro family" on "Dunsmuir Avenue," as they sought to elude ghettoized reality, though the inquisitors' actual concern was overall opposition to the war in Korea,¹⁵¹ often imputed to witnesses and victims alike.

The Dunsmuir bombing also arose in the investigation of Everard Franklin of 11230 Central Avenue. A Negro born in 1902, remarkably he was a union delegate at North American Aviation after the United Auto Workers and CIO helped to organize the plant. But he was thought to maintain contact with both the CP and their Trotskyist antagonists, which was thought to compromise his opposition to the bombing of 2130 and 2135 Dunsmuir in the aftermath of Negroes moving there in March 1952.¹⁵²

That was a problem. The authorities seemed more concerned with the leftist tinge of Negro activists than the attempted murder of Negro homeowners. Cascading alienation among Negroes was the result, preparing the path for the BPP.

¹⁵⁰. Seventh Report, Un-American Activities in California, 1953, Report of the Senate Fact-Finding Committee, Sacramento, 1953, SFSU.

¹⁵¹. U.S. Congress. House. 82nd Congress. Second Session, 30 September and 1-2 October 1952, "Communist Activities Among Professional Groups" and 83rd Congress, First Session, 23-25 March 1953, Part I, HUAC, "Investigation of Communist Activities in the Los Angeles Area," Series II, Box 3, Gilbert Benjamin Papers.

¹⁵². File, 9 October 1955, Box 10, F2.400, D04159, 93-04-12, CUAC Records.

Chapter 6

Communists Purged by Liberals and the Right Wing, 1951-1962

By the mid-1950s Southern California was being buffeted by forces that were contradictory. There was the stultifying persistence of McCarthyism even as the Senator himself seemed to be in eclipse. There was the suffocating presence of Jim Crow, even as the rise of the Montgomery Bus Boycott and their dual tribunes—Dr. King and Rosa Parks—seemed to herald a new day. There was the rising tide of anti-colonialism, symbolized by Ghanaian independence in 1957 even as apartheid seemed to be encrusted in the southern cone of the continent.

Locally, these forces buoyed the NAACP and were not baneful for the CP and the broader left. However, the 1956 revelations about the misdeeds of Stalin, combined with the muscularity of Israeli policy, helped to drive from the ranks those who had been the mainstay of radicalism—Jewish Americans, the Smith Act attorney Ben Margolis, for example. And the enervating presence of the industrial-strength anticommunist megaphone also was wounding to the CP. But about a decade later, this confluence of forces was to provide an opening for the BPP, which sought to carry the flag for socialism and Black Liberation simultaneously, a heavy lift in a nation with an inbred reactionary bloc weaned on the bitter mother's milk of settler colonialism.

* * *

Tracking the journey of Negro journalist and publisher Almena Lomax provides more granular insight into these broader trends. She had begun the *Los Angeles Tribune* during those different days of the 1940s and, continuing the contradictory ethos, she conceded, "I was an atheist"—which did not prevent her from appealing to churchgoing readers nor working for William Gardner Smith, a traditional churchman. She was subsidized partially by her spouse, a "gambler by profession," and thus "very wealthy." Their marriage ran aground by 1957. Yet an opening was created for her periodical since Pat O'Hara of the mainstream *Los*

Angeles Daily News confided that his corner of the news media intentionally ignored most events relevant to Negroes and those of Mexican origin too. "Don't bring it in, don't call it in; they don't buy anything except down on credit," was their mantra, as if they actually believed the canard that these minorities were unattractive to advertisers and were largely shoplifters. "They had a notion that all Negroes purchased from Victor Clothing Company down at Second and Spring on credit or from credit merchants. They didn't understand that there was a Negro market; that was one reason why they didn't run the story" of change then unfolding before their very eyes. Nor did they grasp that with the agonizing retreat of Jim Crow, Negroes in particular would be boosted on the class ladder with concomitant amounts of cash to expend and resultant political muscle to flex. "Another reason" for this nonfeasance was "just plain unadulterated prejudice, that's all," never to be discounted in the settler state. "Therefore, to get the word, you had to have a Negro newspaper," hence her market niche.

From 1947 to 1956 her journal had a respectable circulation of 21,000 but her penchant for not dodging scuffles harmed her bottom line. "I've always been against [pacifism] and Martin Luther King makes me froth at the mouth," a non-trivial viewpoint that sheds light on the eventual rise of the BPP. "I'm for [Fidel] Castro," confessed this Negro businesswoman, also an opinion that served to bolster the BPP. "I think he's great. He's my hero." She thought that since "we were always very liberal...but in favor [of] the underdog" would save her from censure.

As for relations with the organized Jewish community, she too was lukewarm. "Max Mont, you may have heard the name, he's Jewish. The Jewish Labor Committee, these people ran the Negro community at one stage of its development...there was a strong coalition...during the 50s between the Jewish Labor Committee, the labor unions and the NAACP"—on an anticommunist basis, of course. "And we fought many fights against them, for self-determination on the part of the Negroes and they did not like my husband."

What about Pat Alexander of the *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, yet another Negro periodical seeking eyeballs? She "is a very well educated woman," Lomax conceded "but she doesn't write good news stories. She doesn't attempt to. Everything is personalized by her prejudices. She's against Jews; it's all a Jewish plot. Pretty wild and all the stories have to be slanted toward this."

What about Loren Miller, the former radical who became a steady liberal lawyer? He "could have had this place [elected office] on a silver platter a number of times in his life, because people have always had a great affection for him. But he's got a glass jaw." Actually, he was still nervous that his previous Communist ties would return to haunt him.

Lomax was sufficiently honest or perspicacious to acknowledge that "I've known things they've held up there in Hollywood for [Dr.] King which yielded as much as twenty five thousand bucks and King has attended," as the city—as cash

machine—continued to galvanize the movement; “and I could walk right in there,” she continued “and put my finger on people who were ex-Communists, you know, ex-young Communists. I remember one where the pitch man was an ex-young Communist.” The wily writer sensed, “I don’t know if there’s any such thing as an ex-Communist, you know, not that you can’t be an ex-Democrat but there seems to be some type of emotional identification on the part of people who believe. Maybe they are better indoctrinated or maybe it’s the better ideology, I don’t know, I’m not going to knock it. All I’m saying is that the left wing seems to hold the loyalty of its people much more than you know, the other people.”

Notwithstanding, she accused the NAACP of profiting handsomely from these Hollywood fundraisers where funds were supposedly destined for the frontlines of the anti-Jim Crow battles but instead were pocketed by their sticky-fingered cadre,¹ illustrating at once the corruption of a brand of anticommunism that shunned Communists while benefiting from their erstwhile presence. Unfortunately, this trend was not peculiar to the NAACP; staff members at the National Urban League, known to be closer to Big Business, were not above filching thousands of dollars.²

Moreover, Lomax was unnecessarily unkind to Loren Miller, who was well aware of how his past had not been forgotten. The NAACP in L.A. between 1945 and 1948 filed more lawsuits against racist covenants than were filed throughout the nation, and he was largely responsible. When the vocalist and pianist Nat King Cole was barred from property he had bought in L.A., to the extent he was able to gain satisfaction it was due to the previous labor of Miller. Yet the speculation was that when he managed to arrange a buyout of the *California Eagle* theretofore headed by the Robeson comrade Charlotta Bass, the speculation was that he did so, says one analyst, “so he could destroy articles and materials that linked him with Communist causes.”

As for the Jewish community, this same scholar, Shana Beth Bernstein, argues that as early as 1951 in L.A. they had “organized...[the] first such workshops in the country” on anticommunism, a reflection of the presence of Margolis, Healey, Dobbs, Steinberg, and a passel of other Jewish-American radicals. And as for the NAACP, she points to 1956 resignations from their ranks because of their “ineffectiveness” in confronting “such a notorious racist as Jack Tenney,” the embodiment of the statewide Un-American Activities Committee.³

By 1956, Tenney—best known as the lyricist of the popular ditty “Mexicali Rose”—was transitioning from elected office, yet his “Tenney Reports” from his office at 2765 Belden Drive in Hollywood, continued to focus on the NAACP as

1. Almena Lomax, Oral History.

2. Nelson Jackson to Lester Granger, 4 September 1958, Box 1: A104, National Urban League Papers.

3. Bernstein, “Building Bridges,” 11, 171, 192, 203, 215.

a kind of enemy within the gates, much too friendly to Communists,⁴—evidence to the contrary notwithstanding.

Thus, despite favorable global and national trends, self-inflicted wounds limited the effectiveness of the NAACP—and the liberalism they embodied—which exhibited a persistent Negro trend of being quite capable of singing the blues but not so effective at doing something about their plight. As 1953 was about to dawn, Lester Bailey, the Association's field secretary, moaned, "yes, Negroes are being made to sit in Jim Crow coaches RIGHT HERE IN LOS ANGELES," he emphasized.⁵ By early 1958 an NAACP leader in Chicago was told that a "Negro was refused accommodation in a shoe store in Los Angeles," meaning "civil rights law...had been violated"—meaning that passing laws without the sharp teeth of a biting mass movement, destabilized by anticommunism, was fundamentally ineffectual.⁶

Yet, the NAACP remained keen on ousting from influence those with apparent Red "taint," even though Loren Miller knew that "about 80% of loyalty charges in the Post Office Department are leveled at Negroes and Jews."⁷ Miller sought to ride to the rescue of one of these accused, Frank Barnes of Santa Monica, but the prevailing anticommunist atmosphere compromised his best efforts.⁸ Barnes had been dismissed from the Post Office because, it was reported, he had "solicited the aid of subversive groups in picketing the Sears Roebuck."⁹ John Dial, sited at 4255½ South Avalon, member of the Fair Practice and Anti-Discrimination Committee, was accused similarly as he was part of the CIO.¹⁰

Up in Oxnard, the Ventura County branch had a pressing problem. By 1955 the report was that "over 75% of our members are not Negro," in part, said May I. Davis, the branch secretary, because "our Negroes" were "apathetic unless...continually stirring up controversy" was the agenda.¹¹ Translation: Negroes were stirred by activism on critical issues, but the anticommunist torpor often barred it.

Bailey was representative of the NAACP trend of singing the blues but being all thumbs when the moment arrived to do something about them. This may have been a structural problem or, perhaps, an ineluctable result of the NAACP being

4. "Tenney Reports," 1 January 1956, #7, Box 10, F2.400, D04159, 93-04-12, CUAC Records.

5. Lester Bailey to L.A. members, 24 November 1952, Box 5, Social Movements Collection, Claremont Colleges Library, Calif. (abbrev. Social Movements Collection).

6. Donald E. Deuster, Legal Department of Kemper Insurance to Theodore Jones, NAACP president, Chicago, 11 February 1958, Reel 3, Part 27, Selected Branch Files, 1956-1965, Series D, NAACP Papers-UCLA.

7. Hobart La Grone to Loren Miller, 14 August 1952, Box 34, Loren Miller Papers.

8. Franklin Williams to Loren Miller, 22 January 1952, Box 34, Loren Miller Papers.

9. Noah Griffin to Clarence Mitchell, 5 May 1948, Part III, Box A286, NAACP Papers-LC.

10. John Dial to Clarence Mitchell, 5 May 1948, Part III, Box A286, NAACP Papers-LC.

11. May I. Davis to Lucille Black, Membership Chair, 23 April 1955, Part II, Box C17, NAACP Papers-LC.

forced to ignore its true interests. For by May 1956, Louis Acone of 344 West Rosecrans of Compton complained with exasperation that Association "members do not realize that this is not a social organization but a legal organization fighting for their rights as citizens. It is pathetic the number of people that are completely unaware of its existence and many that do are grossly mislead [*sic*] as to the aims of the Association."¹²

Undeterred, by 1956 Bailey had communicated jointly with Wilkins, Gloster Current, and Franklin Williams about that *rara avis*: a contested branch election in L.A. "The left wing came up with a slate of candidates," including "well-known and long-reputed Stalinists" that "have been integrated with respected community persons." The opposing slate included Dr. Hudson; Earl Warren's buddy, Walter Gordon; Maurice Dawkins; future City Councilman Gil Lindsay, and others. His primary target seemed to be the effective attorney Herbert Simmons and his ties to the Civil Rights Congress, then in the process of being driven into extinction. Almena Lomax was no favorite of his either. He concluded warningly: "the Left is moving in with its slate and may capture our largest West Coast unit." Still Simmons and Lomax were seen as the dangerous duo of subversion "in the left wing corner," and the Association was dutybound to "throw down the gauntlet" and take on both and their comrades too.¹³

Simmons was also in the crosshairs as far as Norman Houston was concerned. He was a prototypical NAACP leader, affluent, given his role as president of Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company of 1999 West Adams, whose fortunes were heavily dependent on a captive Negro market. He informed Wilkins in December 1955, the executor of his policies, that the "leftist group here" had been "very active prior to the election in behalf of candidate Simmons," but he was thwarted—or so it was thought, since "skullduggery is [now] past."¹⁴

Yet Simmons was too skilled to sideline permanently. A few weeks after Houston had given him a premature burial, he addressed the Westwood branch at 574 Hilgard Avenue on the implications of the earthshaking Montgomery Bus Boycott.¹⁵ Despite the Red Scare, Simmons was not easy to subdue. Or at least that was the thinking of a self-described "well informed member" of the Association in his missive to Wilkins. Supposedly, Simmons had "brought in a few hundred memberships on deadline for voting" in the upcoming branch election, and since he was "rumored to be either a Communist or a fellow traveler" this left anticommunists in a quandary: Discourage Simmons's recruiting, which augmented the treasury, or throw caution to the winds and purge him and his

12. Lucille Acone to Lucille Black, 24 May 1956, Part III, Box C6, NAACP Papers-LC.

13. Lester Bailey to Roy Wilkins, Gloster Current and Franklin Williams, 21 November 1956, Reel 3, Series D, Part 27, Selected Branch Files, NAACP Papers, UCLA.

14. Norman O. Houston to Roy Wilkins, 19 February 1955, Reel 2, Series D, Part 27, Selected Branch Files, NAACP Papers, UCLA.

15. NAACP Newsletter, 26 March 1956, Part III, Box E2, NAACP Papers-LC.

supposed followers?¹⁶ A midway remedy was forged: In the 1955 branch election two anticommunist candidates consolidated their forces in order to defeat Simmons's insurgency.¹⁷

But the Simmons faction continued to exude strength, compelling W.J. Bassett, secretary of the L.A. Central Labor Council, to express irritation since his supervisor—an AFL-CIO bigwig—was not allowed to “speak or vote” on NAACP leadership, a “humiliation” that was “shocking” and dripping with “hostility” to the anticommunist consensus.¹⁸ Bassett should have relaxed. At the NAACP's 46th convention in Atlantic City in June 1955, there were ritualistic assaults on the CP, expellees from the once rival CIO, and their comrades in the National Negro Labor Council.¹⁹

But Bassett was not the only labor boss who was up in arms. W.F. Anderson, of Local 300 of the International Hod Carriers Building and Common Laborers Union at 2005 West Pico, told Franklin Williams that he and his constituents shared “great concern” about “the future” of the branch. The “program of the NAACP and that of organized labor has long been linked,” he argued, but now with the alleged influence of Simmons and Lomax the “branch is about to travel in [the] opposite direction.” Rhetorically, he posed, “I should resign.”²⁰

Montgomery was a watershed, leading to UCLA activists seeking to invite to campus the elderly patriarch, Du Bois himself, to speak. But a member of the branch, Niles Garrett, threatened to resign if this were to occur. Attorney Thomas Neusom of the L.A. NAACP reportedly “believed that the sponsorship was ill advised.”²¹ Niles was no cipher. By 1956, though only 23 years of age, he had spent two years in the armed forces before arriving at UCLA, where he became head of the Association chapter.²²

Healey carped about “paranoia” infecting the ranks of the Reds but they were hardly alone. Gil Lindsay, born in 1900 in Mississippi and by late 1955 sited at 744 East 52nd Place, went on to become a staid member of the L.A. City Council. But because he was noted in a Communist organ and was on the mailing list of the Civil Rights Congress, he had an intelligence file which, if he weren't careful could have derailed his career.²³ He was not alone. The Reverend Paul Lehman of 354 East Jefferson was born in 1894 in Louisiana and presided over St. Paul's Lutheran Church at 666 East 37th Street, which provided impetus for his

16. Message to Roy Wilkins, 6 September 1955, Part III, Box C6, NAACP Papers-LC.

17. Roscoe Carroll to Norman Houston, 19 December 1955, Part III, Box C7, NAACP Papers-LC.

18. W.J. Bassett to Thomas Neusom, president of L.A. branch, 31 October 1955, Part III, Box C7, NAACP Papers-LC.

19. Resolutions, 1955, Carton 71, NAACP Papers-UCB.

20. W.F. Anderson to Franklin Williams, 21 January 1955, Carton 82, NAACP Papers-UCB.

21. Bennett Johnson to Dear Sir, 26 April 1956, Part III, Box E2, NAACP Papers-LC.

22. Progress Report on “Project Africa,” 18 December 1956, Part III, Box E2, NAACP Papers-LC.

23. File, 6 October 1955, Box 10, F2.400, D04159, 93-04-12, CUAC Records.

successful effort to become a Vice-President of the NAACP. Yet he too was on the mailing list of the CRC with potentially untoward consequences.²⁴

In the resultant flux, Miller and Charlotta Bass seemed to be changing places. As he moved away from socialism, she gravitated toward it. She was instrumental when the Independent Progressive Party—by her calculations—received 275,970 signatures on petitions for ballot access in 1948. By 1950 she was in Prague, then it was on to Moscow where she conferred with Lily Golden, daughter of a Black American expatriate, whom she characterized as “tall” and “slender.” She ran for Congress in 1950 on a third-party ticket and did not prevail—but a signpost pointing to the eventual rise of the BPP in the same vicinity was her analysis that the “62nd Assembly District representing Central Avenue, voted almost solidly for me.”²⁵

Still, Lomax had a point in her dissection of Miller, who tended to walk on eggs—his fabled “glass jaw”—wary that he would be red-baited into irrelevance and ineffectuality. By early 1955 he remained on a “Dear Thurgood” basis with the NAACP consul and commiserated as if he too were an outsider: “Communists fish in these troubled waters,” he began with his usual caution, “but I do not think it is true that all of our difficulties can be traced to the ‘vigorous anti-Communist position,’ which Frank [Williams] has maintained.”²⁶ What the NAACP needed then was what Miller could have provided, a rebuke of the “vigorous anticommunist position,” but his unique personal circumstance limited his candor. (It was unclear if Williams’s “vigorous anticommunist position” was behind the invitation to S.I. Hayakawa—linguist and leader of San Francisco State University in the 1960s when the campus erupted in protest—who addressed the Palo Alto branch of the NAACP in early 1956.)²⁷

Williams moved into his San Francisco office at 690 Market Street in October 1950 (though he spent considerable time at his chic Palo Alto residence at 4160 Coulombe Drive). He was not hesitant to invoke the FBI Director himself, J. Edgar Hoover, in order to bolster his unchallenged anticommunist credentials. Yet the crafty bureaucrat managed “to read ‘Political Affairs’ every month,” speaking of the CP journal, “but I am afraid to take out a subscription to it,” not least because the CP “as such is an international conspiracy.” He contended that as of 1955 UCLA had 267 Reds on campus, a trend mirrored at Arizona State University where—it was said—these subversives “substantially infiltrated and took over the Tempe, Arizona branch back in the early ‘50s. We lifted its

24. File, 14 October 1955, Box 10, F2.400, D04159, 93-04-12, CUAC Records.

25. Charlotta Bass, *Forty Years: Memoirs from the Pages of a Newspaper*, Los Angeles: Bass, 1960, 142, 160, 166, 168, 173.

26. Loren Miller to “Dear Thurgood,” 1 March 1955, Box 34, Loren Miller Papers.

27. Announcement, 18 February 1956, Carton 86, NAACP Papers-UCB. See also Gerald W. Haslam with Janice E. Haslam, *In Thought and Action: The Enigmatic Life of S.I. Hayakawa*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011.

charter,"²⁸ he said peremptorily, anticipating the wartime trope of destroying the village in order to save it. (The Westwood figure seems extraordinarily high in retrospect, but it does provide context for the arrival in the following decade of Angela Davis.)

Thanks to Williams, the NAACP continued to campaign against the left-leaning stevedores' union and their Marine Cooks and Stewards ally while backing the retrograde Seafarers union.²⁹ Williams rationalized this policy though he well knew that "Negro and other minority persons predominate [in] the Marine Cooks & Stewards...throughout the coast."³⁰ "The waterfront of San Francisco"—and to a degree Long Beach and San Pedro too—"is the economic backbone of the Negro community" and, to their credit, the Goodlett-influenced branch adamantly opposed the anticommunist turn spearheaded by Williams.³¹

As late as 1958, Helene Horwitz of San Francisco was moved to alert *Gloster Current* after the elderly Du Bois addressed the branch. "I am wondering," she said conscientiously, "if the San Francisco branch has Communistic leanings."³² By this point, the presence of Du Bois, boycotted during the height of the Red Scare, was a stumbling block in terms of forging anticommunist unity. The conflict broke into the press, Lomax's organ, in 1958: There was denial that there was "refusal to present [Du Bois] in a public meeting," and the otherwise anticommunist stalwart Maurice Dawkins chose to "state for the record that Communism and Communist sympathizers should not derive any aid or comfort from the fact that some of us who are non-Communist or anti-communist are intelligent enough to appreciate the pioneering efforts, the brilliant scholarship, and the historical significance of Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois." But if Du Bois, why not Robeson? And if Robeson, why not William Patterson? And if Patterson, why not Shirley Graham Du Bois? And so on, as a kind of "domino theory." "Monolithic Communism" was the slogan of the republic but, as well, anticommunism was most effective when it was monolithic and did not accept exceptions—even for Du Bois. Thus, turmoil was the order of the day as future City Councilman Gil Lindsay led the anticommunist charge against Du Bois but was defeated by a 10-8 vote and the founder was invited to provide a public address.³³

The lineup of forces in the Southland was shifting perceptibly against the anticommunist tide. Almena Lomax, the publisher and writer, was a prime reason. With impudence unfurled, she actually wrote Tass, the Soviet news agency, and

28. Transcript, 11 December 1956, Volume 65A, Box 32, 93-04-12, D4166, CUAC Records.

29. Press Release, 14 January 1955, Part II, Box A545, NAACP Papers-LC.

30. Franklin Williams to Roy Wilkins, *Gloster Current*, Herbert Hill & Clarence Mitchell, 31 January 1955, Part II, Box A545, NAACP Papers-LC.

31. Morris Watson to "Editors," 3 February 1955, Part II, Box A545, NAACP Papers-LC.

32. Helene Horwitz to *Gloster Current*, 22 April 1958, in Reel 3, Part 27, Series D, Selected Branch Files, 1956-1965, NAACP Papers-UCLA.

33. *Los Angeles Tribune*, 18 April 1958. Although the general trajectory of Du Bois's politics was well-known, actually, he did not join the CP until 1961, two years before his death at the age of 95.

asked Du Bois's aid in reaching them: "I figured he knew them and he knew me," a maneuver generally verboten during these difficult days.³⁴

The Reverend Dawkins was unhappy with press coverage of this scandal. The branch was "described as refusing to present [Du Bois] in a public meeting," which he sort of denied while contending that the idea that the National Office gave "permission" was also "absolutely untrue." Lomax's response was that "obviously" the NAACP saw Du Bois as "untouchable, a criminal, a traitor."³⁵ But this cleric may not have been the most reliable narrator. Though serving as president of the branch, he seemed to be unaware of the existence of CORE, the Congress of Racial Equality, an "organization calling themselves" was his dismissive reference, while asking querulously, "is it authentic?"³⁶

Gloster Current, the anticommunist enforcer, was displeased. Yes, L.A. "served as a reluctant host" for the elderly visitor while San Francisco was split, though happily he counted "few people left...in key positions" who were close to the CP. Still, Current was upset and demanded that his supervisor, Roy Wilkins, write a "strong letter" instructing branches that "they can give no support or cooperation with leftists, including Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois." For good measure, he attached a copy of the infamous 1950 anticommunist resolution of the NAACP and quoted J. Edgar Hoover while concluding militantly, "maintain vigilance against Communists, left wingers and others."³⁷

Initially, San Francisco had voted 17-4 to invite Du Bois to speak, but then, said Lindsay—then serving as "Field Deputy" to the Euro-American caudillo of South L.A., Kenneth Hahn—they "backed down" under the glare of unrelenting pressure. Lindsay did recognize the obvious, that "with the advent of the independence of Ghana, Du Bois' name came into new prominence."³⁸

This weasel-like attitude toward their founder doubtless contributed to the perception expressed by Mineola Clark of 3613 West Adams Boulevard who found "resistance and distrust of the L.A. NAACP from some of my co-workers," stemming from both the "whites only praise" and "local Negroes [assuming that] isn't good," a dual outlook conjoined at the hip.³⁹

The film industry continued to manifest the excesses of anticommunism. This was known to Ross Raines of Pasadena, who was employed as a projectionist in Glendale. Yet the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees [IATSE] began picketing his theater because he was not a member of their union. However, as he pointed out to the Pasadena branch of the NAACP, "their charter prohibits any person of the colored race from being a member anywhere in the United

34. Almena Lomax, Oral History.

35. Maurice Dawkins to *Tribune*, 18 April 1958, Part III, Box C7, NAACP Papers-LC.

36. Maurice Dawkins to Henry Moon, 14 February 1958, Part III, Box C7, NAACP Papers-LC.

37. Gloster Current to Roy Wilkins, 5 May 1958, Part III, Box C8, NAACP Papers-LC.

38. *Los Angeles Tribune*, 18 April 1958.

39. Mineola Clark to NAACP-L.A. 25 October 1958, Part III, Box C7, NAACP Papers-LC.

States.... I am a member of...Independent Motion Picture Workers of America and this union does admit colored persons."⁴⁰

And it was not as if Pasadena were Shangri-la for Negroes. By the time of Raines's writing, this community had an overall population of 104,577, including 7820 Negroes. But the latter had hardly advanced since—it was said—the first Negro to "purchase property in the community...a Mr. Holmes who drove a herd of cattle into Los Angeles from Nebraska in 1883 and then bought a vineyard in Pasadena."⁴¹

Yet despite the obstacles strewn promiscuously in the path of the NAACP in Pasadena, they continued to chase away members deemed to be crimson-tinged. Thus, Ruby Williams, president of the branch, bluntly chose to "cancel the 1958 memberships of Donald C. and Martha Wheeldin, 145 Hurlbut Street" in Pasadena since "he makes no attempt to conceal his Communist affiliations."⁴² Wilkins got involved since the accused had left Red ranks and "claims that he had a membership in the NAACP while being a member of the Communist Party.... are we correct in keeping them out?" he queried.⁴³

The oil industry was more of a factor in the Southland than in the Bay Area. And by 1956 Wilkins was told that there were 10 companies involved, with one local union alone representing more than 10,000 laborers—but there were "less than thirty Negroes in the entire industry." Yet, the NAACP seemed to be more preoccupied with routing Communists and leftists in unions than cracking down on racial laggards.⁴⁴ By 1958 even the Urban League, which sought to stay in the good graces of Big Business, was forced to adopt a "special approach" toward "Standard Oil which is the least progressive of the oil companies [for] Negroes" in L.A.,⁴⁵ a dubious victor in a retrograde sweepstakes.

Unbowed, Williams doubled down. At issue were future BPP consuls Charles Garry and Leo Branton and their ties to the National Lawyers Guild and Civil Rights Congress. "Branton also has such affiliations," he advised Thurgood Marshall, "and is a partner in the Margolis law firm in Los Angeles which is the official Communist Party law firm and whose members are notorious for their Communist affiliations and identifications." Beamingly, he added, "we successfully beat down this effort" to ally with them and "in the process of reorganizing the [Legal Redress] Committee [of the NAACP]," he "uncovered a long record of left-wing affiliations of Herbert Simmons," now primed for a purge. Thus, the effective Simmons should "not be the spokesman in our legal

40. Ross Raines, Sr. to Pasadena NAACP, 16 July 1955, Part II, Box A545, NAACP Papers-LC.
41. Betty Jensen Jones and Robert W. O'Brien, "The Negro Community in Pasadena: A Survey of Levels of Employment," Pasadena: NAACP, 1955, Part II, Box A545, NAACP Papers-LC.
42. Ruby Williams to Lucille Black, 18 June 1958, Part III, Box C10, NAACP Papers-LC.
43. Roy Wilkins to Gloster Current, 15 September 1958, Part III, Box C10, NAACP Papers-LC.
44. John Dial to Roy Wilkins, 28 May 1956, Part III, Box C13, NAACP Papers-LC.
45. Nelson Jackson to Lester Granger, 4 September 1958, Box I: A 104, National Urban League Papers.

cases in Los Angeles for the NAACP" and "Claude [Hudson], Loren [Miller] and C.L. Dellums" in Oakland agree.⁴⁶ Effectiveness in fighting Jim Crow be damned. Miller punctuated this posture when he agreed to cooperate with the anticommunist scholar Wilson Record, then in the process of publishing a defamation of Black Communists.⁴⁷

There was a scintilla of accuracy in Williams's overview: By 1955 Branton was part of the Margolis law firm,⁴⁸ which did bode well for the future of Southland radicalism. Ironically, Loren Miller—whose arrival in L.A. decades earlier was as suspected Red cadre—now was conspiring with Franklin Williams to make sure that Branton did not secure an "appointment...to the Legal Redress Committee" of the NAACP, leaving Black L.A. as the victim in being deprived of his advocacy.⁴⁹

Yet this anticommunist crusade was an uphill climb at best, for in the midst of blocking Branton and Simmons in the Southland, a couple identified as "Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Stender" joined the NAACP in Berkeley.⁵⁰ It turns out that both were en route to becoming leading lawyers for both the BPP and Angela Davis.⁵¹ The NAACP did not seem to grasp that among the potent right-wing in the U.S., their fundamental antiracist mission was itself adjudged to be subversive and would inevitably be accused of being Communist-inspired—no matter how many purges the besieged Association executed.

While NAACP leaders were maneuvering furiously and busily ferreting out real and imagined Reds, police batons continued to crack Negro skulls, often without the kind of organized resistance that soon became the BPP forte. The yearend report of the Association in 1956 counted "36 complaints of alleged police brutality during the first quarter" alone; similarly, "some 9000 persons attended one of the most impressive meetings held at the Olympic Auditorium on May 28" as "\$5688.00 was sent to the Montgomery Improvement Association" of Dr. King and Rosa Parks (presumably eluding the grasp of sticky fingers).⁵²

In fact, an often-unacknowledged aspect of the skyrocketing popularity of these two titans was their frequent presence in the news media capital that was the

46. Franklin Williams to Thurgood Marshall, 28 February 1955, Box 34, Loren Miller Papers.

47. Loren Miller to Wilson Record, 3 February 1955, Box 34, Loren Miller Papers. "I will be more than happy to see you whenever you come to Los Angeles." See also Wilson Record, *The Negro and the Communist Party*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011 [originally published 1951].

48. Legal Papers filed by firm of Margolis, McTernan and Branton, 1955, Box 35, Screened Files.

49. Loren Miller to "Dear Frank," 25 February 1955, Carton 82, NAACP Papers-UCB.

50. Lucille Black, membership secretary, to Mrs. Eugenia Greene, 18 October 1957, Reel 2, Part 27, Series D, Selected Branch Files, NAACP Papers-UCLA.

51. See, e.g., Lise Pearlman, *Call me Phaedra: The Life and Times of Movement Lawyer Fay Stender*. Berkeley: Regent Press, 2018.

52. Annual Report, 1956, Reel 3, Series D, Part 27, Selected Branch Files, 1956-1965, NAACP Papers-UCLA.

Southland. April 1956 was typical when an observer noted that "3000 people turned out" to welcome Parks.⁵³

The presence of these two anti-Jim Crow stars could not obscure the wider point that the influx of more Negroes into town unnerved the police and, augmented by pre-existing white supremacy, fueled a wave of police terror that reached a crescendo in August 1965 with the Watts Revolt.⁵⁴ By June 1957 at Ward A.M.E. Church at 1177 West 25th Street, a forum on "Police Brutality" unfolded.⁵⁵ Days later there was a stark picture of "White Supremacists in View Park...site of [a] burning cross" as "bricks were throw in [the] window" of those seen as objecting.⁵⁶ In the previous year alone the NAACP had filed, it was said, "six cases of alleged [police] brutality to the Grand Jury," and "ten cases were filed" against the out-of-control L.A. Police Department, garnering a "total of \$500,000" in damages, which was clearly insufficient in deterring the rapacious.⁵⁷

Lillie Grigsby of the Long Beach branch had a contrary viewpoint. By early 1959 she had established a branch office at 1156 New York Street in a "building owned by Dr. J.O. Garland, a Negro physician"; this edifice was emblematic of the larger point that her town was deemed to be a "rapidly growing city with a large number of liberal minded citizens."⁵⁸ Maybe. Yet this Panglossian optimism was countered quickly by Grigsby herself, who reported how a "Negro family was left stranded on Ellis Island because their sponsors, a Long Beach church group refused to accept the refugees when it was discovered they were Negroes."⁵⁹

A few months earlier, the news from the City of L.A. was similarly discouraging after years of hand-to-hand anticommunist combat. Dr. Hudson was "disappointed" in "your conduct with regard to the recent fraudulent NAACP election," he said reprovingly to Franklin Williams. How could he allow a "bunch of thugs" to prevail, for Hudson insisted that he would "not sit idly by and let any 'Red' element take the branch completely away from us." How could Williams 'blithely "take Loren's word" on the ordinariness of the election and "you expect to push him down our throats. Well," he harrumphed, "it isn't going to happen," since despite his ideological contortions, "Loren is strictly partisan" and "I'll be damned if I'll stand by and let this 'Red' gang take the Los Angeles branch." Then in the height of obviousness, he concluded, "I resent your action."⁶⁰ He brought similar gloomy tidings to Judge Hubert Delany of the all-powerful NAACP

53. Mamesba Tackett to Lucille Black, 10 April 1956, Reel 2, Series D, Part 27, Selected Branch Files, NAACP Papers-UCLA.

54. Home, *Fire this Time*, passim.

55. NAACP Newsletter, June 1957, Part III, Box I3, NAACP Papers-LC.

56. NAACP Newsletter, July 1957, Part III, Box I3, NAACP Papers-LC.

57. NAACP Newsletter, August 1957, Part III, Box I3, NAACP Papers-LC.

58. Lillie Grigsby to Gloster Current, 20 January 1959, Part III, Box C7, NAACP Papers-LC.

59. Lillie Grigsby to National Office, 7 April 1960, Part III, Box C7, NAACP Papers-LC.

60. Dr. Hudson to Franklin Williams, 14 January 1959, Carton 2, NAACP Papers-UCB.

Board. "Some of those people elected are strongly suspect by the Un-American Activities Committee."⁶¹

Dr. Hudson was hardly finished in his upbraiding for he then told "Dear Roy [Wilkins]" that during the recent branch election "every method in the book was used to confuse those who were voting and the confusers [*sic*] were bare of any scruples"; "most of them are extremely left-wing. Yet, though Loren Miller was fully aware of this fact, he did everything he could, through fair or foul methods, to confuse the voters," raising searching questions of whose side he was really on. Then during the "first meeting of the new board, one of the extremes," i.e., "Commies," were quite vocal. Culprits included Jack Tanner and that old reliable, Herbert Simmons, with the latter "taking a leading part in this administration,"⁶² an almost mocking way to greet 1959 after more than a decade of combative anticommunism. Still, somehow the NAACP retained sensitive intelligence on the CP and its allies that—possibly—could have come from close collaboration with various government agencies. This included detail on Luther Del Coffey of 1523 South Arlington, denoted as a Communist "steelworker" and a file on James T. Allen of 629 West 85th, part of a Communist "Building Trades Club" that was pressing claims against the Carpenters. And more on Tanner, said to be born in Russia.⁶³

* * *

A kind of "aboveground railroad" stretched from the Southland to Dixie, carrying all manner of material support. On the one hand, this was a recognition of the "Unfreedom National" trend imbedded in white supremacy, and attacking at its presumed strongest point was sagacious. On the other hand, again, the cynic might see this trend as an evasion of the fierce battle at home.

The anticommunist hawk from the top NAACP leadership, Gloster Current, visited the L.A. branch in late December 1955, as Montgomery was percolating and the aftermath of the lynching of Emmett Till still bruised. Current found massive shipping of "toys, clothing and food to Mississippi" with a "total value...around \$10,000," and "\$5000 in cash was sent" for good measure. Yet the "cost of this operation was high. One truck cost \$1300...promotional costs were also high," indicative possibly of profiteering,⁶⁴ congruent with the turbocharged capitalist ethos in the NAACP.

61. Dr. Hudson to Judge Delany, 28 January 1959, Carton 2, NAACP Papers-UCB.

62. Dr. Hudson to "Dear Roy," 2 April 1959, Part III, Box C7, NAACP Papers-LC.

63. File, ca. 1959, including *Los Angeles Examiner*, 29 March 1959, Part III, Box C7, NAACP Papers-LC.

64. Gloster Current to Roy Wilkins, 3 January 1956, Part III, Box C7, NAACP Papers-LC.

As a prime architect of the rightward shift, Current had to maneuver carefully. Thus, he contacted Bill Walker of 2745 Palm Grove Avenue cheerfully, "I have seen you in motion pictures," he admitted, and had known of him since their mutual times in Detroit, "when I was trying to make it playing music in and around Paradise Valley." Yes, it was "touchy" to raise the matter of "stereotype" of Negroes in Hollywood since—given the NAACP's current milquetoast approach—that could lead to an undesirable result: Okay, their putative allies amongst the moviedom executives might respond: We won't hire Negroes at all.⁶⁵ Walker, who had been featured in the textbook example of "stereotype," namely *Amos 'n' Andy*, responded that he desired to make a cowboy movie, presumably deepening stereotypes of Native Americans.⁶⁶

By this juncture, the über-talented megastar Sammy Davis, Jr. was an NAACP regular, and flocking to his side were a galaxy of similarly well-endowed stars whose consciences were pricked by the misery of Mississippi.⁶⁷ Soon the Beverly Hills-Hollywood branch, fueled by his largesse, was contributing heavily to national coffers.⁶⁸ And the chanteuse and actor Abbey Lincoln, then of 2042 Hancourt, was being solicited for a Life Membership ("While in Cuba you had expressed a willingness to work with your local NAACP branch.")⁶⁹ By 1957 the Association had won applause from baseball fans after they were reported as being sympathetic to star centerfielder Willie Mays, whose Giants had just left Harlem for San Francisco. The problem was that those who had fought in favor of racist housing covenants were hardly pleased when he started seeking housing in segregated neighborhoods. Mays's spouse too was displeased, denouncing the "camouflage" she noted in her new hometown: "They grin in your face and then deceive you," she snorted.⁷⁰

The National Urban League, known to brownnose with Big Business, was accused of going too far in currying favor with Walter O'Malley of the Brooklyn Dodgers, who bolted with his baseball team to Los Angeles as Mays was being flummoxed due north. The right-wing populist sports columnist Dick Young, of the *New York Daily News*, was irate when the NUL gave the bolting businessman an award, and the group conceded that they were "likely out of its depth" in doing so.⁷¹ Quite ungraciously, Young twisted the knife in concurring with this assessment: "your organization was suckered into such exploitation," he

65. Gloster Current to Bill Walker, 24 April 1957, Part III, Box C7, NAACP Papers-LC.

66. Bill Walker to Gloster Current, 24 February 1957, Part III, Box C7, NAACP Papers-LC.

67. NAACP Newsletter, February 1956, Volume 1, #5, Part III, Box C7, NAACP Papers-LC.

68. Althea Simmons to Henry Moon, 10 April 1962, Reel 3, Part 27, Series D, NAACP Papers-UCLA.

69. Marion Stewart, Life Membership Campaign to Abbey Lincoln, 24 April 1957, Part III, Box C6, NAACP Papers-LC.

70. File on Willie Mays, including *San Francisco News*, 14 November 1957, Carton 103, NAACP Papers-UCB.

71. Lester Granger to Dick Young, 22 May 1958, Box I: A104, National Urban League Papers.

countered.⁷² Then baseball star Jackie Robinson, whose desegregation initiative was tied intimately to Brooklyn baseball, jumped in, causing Wesley Brazier of the League to castigate his "verbal attack" on his group because of its "poor judgment....letters from New York stated that they would imagine that our agency will be giving an award to the Governor of Georgia,"⁷³ the ultimate insult. Sarcasm dripping, Brazier told his League supervisor Lester Granger that as a result of this faux pas "we rated above the stoning of Nixon and the ripping of the United States flag in Peru."⁷⁴

When by mid-June 1956, a reported "11,000 memberships" were enrolled in L.A., Sammy Davis, Jr. and his magnetism could credibly claim credit.⁷⁵ Still, there was a gnawing recognition among the NAACP rank and file that the anticommunist turn had helped to induce what one member called "parlous times...our organization is being outlawed and is [in a] fight for its life...[the] Ku Klux Klan is reincarnated in 'White Citizens Councils,'"⁷⁶—all true. It could have been added that by late 1956, Franklin Williams, then carrying the elevated title of "Secretary-Counsel" of the NAACP, informed J. Allen Reese of Venice that "the state has been flooded with this 'hate' literature in recent months"—although he did not connect this perilous trend to his capitulation to an anticommunism that sabotaged the predators preying on this very same ultra-right.⁷⁷ Thus, by 1958 there were an estimated 100,000 members of the ultra-right John Birch Society, with a disproportionate number to be found in the Southland.⁷⁸ A self-depicted Birch "front" sited in posh San Marino, adjacent to Pasadena, gave an indication of their mode of operation when they listed "Current Communist Goals" as "present homosexuality, degeneracy and promiscuity as normal, natural, healthy"⁷⁹—which, defensively, helped to cause the CP to revolt against this perception.

Although the path had been cleared for the NAACP as the state handcuffed rivals to the left, resolving a conflict stretching back to the 1930s with the internecine quarrel over the fate of the Scottsboro Nine, Association leaders came to recognize that the state could be a fickle ally. Matters came to a cul de sac in December 1958 when then Field Secretary Tarea Hall Pittman took stock. "For twenty five years," she said, "the Los Angeles branch was under the leadership of two men"—Dr. Hudson from 1924 to 1934, and Judge Thomas Griffith from 1934

72. Dick Young to Lester Granger, 19 May 1958, Box I: A104, National Urban League Papers.

73. Wesley Brazier to Jackie Robinson 12 May 1958, Box I: A104, National Urban League Papers.

74. Wesley Brazier to Lester Granger, 9 May 1958, Box I: A 104, National Urban League Papers.

75. Lucille Black to Charles Knox, 2730 South Normandie, 6 June 1956, Part III, Box C7, NAACP Papers-LC.

76. Marion Buford to National Office, 24 April 1956, Part III, Box C7, NAACP Papers-LC.

77. Franklin Williams to J. Allen Reese, 5 December 1956, Carton 69, NAACP Papers-UCB.

78. Matthew Dallek, *Birchers: How the John Birch Society Radicalized the American Right*, New York: Basic, 2022, 9.

79. "Train," n.d., FC 06 0153 03, CSU-Fullerton.

to 1949. During the latter's rule there was a "feeling of discontent, a cry for new leadership," and a "feeling that the branch was not tackling the problems of Negroes in Los Angeles," all lubricated by "charges" of "Communist infiltration." Then there was the spectacular population growth, also noticed by Healey, with the number of Negroes "growing by leaps and bounds," and along with that was the "abuse to which the president has been subjected," accompanied by a "serious drop in membership in a city that is constantly growing...[all] must be viewed with alarm."

For although the Negro population was 171,209 in 1950, by 1957 the total was "389,000." This had instigated a crisis of rapid change when an influx of population often overwhelmed channels meant to address their needs. Membership had "dwindled to less than 4000 in 1949" and a year later "had shrunk to 2500," even as "membership of Los Angeles represents half of the total membership in California." Her explanation was socio-psychological in that "many believe that by coming to California they reached the 'Promised Land,'" an illusion dashed rapidly but depressing activism nonetheless. The city was "suffering from the growing pains of a formerly small community which has mushroomed within a decade into the second largest city in the nation." There were branches in "South Antelope Valley, Santa Monica, Pasadena, Monrovia, Pomona, Compton and Long Beach," along with L.A. proper, "Pacoima and San Pedro." But gaping gaps were left in membership rolls.⁸⁰

All the big bucks dumped into NAACP coffers by the likes of Sammy Davis, Jr. could not compensate for a lagging ideological line, which then manifested in lagging praxis. Thus, Estelle Van Meter contacted the branch at its office at 4261 South Central Avenue, soon to be a citadel for the BPP precisely because of this laggardness. She had been elected to leadership in December 1954 but now it was June 1956, and she was resigning. Why? She was irked after Talmadge Davis had suffered a minor fender bender but the notorious LAPD cops had arrived, and soon he was in the Georgia Street Receiving Hospital (soon to be defunct) as a result of their battering—"where he died because of a broken breastbone that had lacerated his heart." There was a justifiable "suspicion" that he was "beaten to death" by these thugs in blue. His case arrived at the desk of the NAACP, but for "ten days" there was radio silence as if the branch saw its mission as curbing community outrage rather than be propelled by it. By December 1955 they had raised thousands for similar outrages in Mississippi, but "not one cent of that money ever reached anyone in Mississippi" as this "project was entered into without any prior knowledge or consent by the Executive Committee." Then the estimable Rosa Parks arrived in town and "her name was used to raise money" with a similar expected outcome. The "Legal Redress Committee no longer

80. Report by Tarea Hall Pitman, 30 December 1958, Reel 3, Series D, Part 27, Selected Branch Files, 1956-1965, NAACP Papers-UCLA.

functions with any vigor," as too much energy had been expended in blocking the suspected Communist attorney Herbert Simmons and ignoring the similarly competent Leo Branton. But Van Meter, despite her fury, apparently was not wise to the class and ideological forces that led to her disgust. Instead, she railed vehemently against the \$89,000 sent to the NAACP treasury, "more money than has ever before been raised here in the history of the organization," with "no proper accounting," and no "audit has ever been made," despite a "great deal of self-advertising" that had soaked up much of this treasury. There had been little effort to sabotage the "notorious racist... Jack Tenney" who was "running against David Williams, who is himself a Negro and has a splendid civil rights record." Mailing lists of the NAACP were "sold" to the highest bidder, a security breach if nothing else, but was also "ineffective, corrupt and ridiculous." The NAACP had claimed victory in driving off the air the defamatory TV program *Amos 'n Andy*, yet branch "officers are now widely referred to as 'the Kingfish' and as 'Calhoun,'"⁸¹ the bumbling, disgraced characters of this anti-Negro satire.

Van Meter was not alone in her revulsion. Bertrand Bratton was an attorney at 1105 East Vernon and he was saddened to report that branch "records" were "fragmentary, disconnected and without any systematic design which would lend itself to an audit," meaning "utter confusion" plus a "betrayal of... public trust."⁸² Still, it was Van Meter who came under fire with the controversial Negro periodical, the *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, weighing in with a front page editorial.⁸³ Almena Lomax's *Los Angeles Tribune* denounced the "air of corruption" in the NAACP and the "hustlers" who "come to hover like vultures around" the group. Their solution? "Impeach Neusom," speaking of the branch leader and anticommunist Mandarin.⁸⁴ The Sturm und Drang led to a June 1956 branch meeting of 70—despite 17,000 being on the rolls and—it was reported to Arthur Spingarn of the leadership—"without prior notice" this dissident, Van Meter was subjected to "expulsion."⁸⁵

The aftermath of the slaying of the youthful Chicagoan, Emmett Till, in dankest Mississippi revealed a similar trend. Weeks later, 3500 assembled at the Olympic Auditorium, with the agent of the state reporting that "both the white and colored race" predominated with, suspiciously, Frank Barnes, a postal worker facing disloyalty charges, greeting the crowd. Franklin Williams spoke but, also suspiciously, there was a radical tinge to the meeting in that the then youthful Jerry Pacht, soon to gain notoriety in the Angela Davis case as a judge, donated \$25. while the L.A. branch of the NAACP provided a hefty \$6500 out of the \$20,000

81. Estelle Van Meter to L.A. branch, 5 June 1956, Part III, Box C6, NAACP Papers-LC.

82. Bertrand Bratton to Board of Control of L.A. branch, 28 May 1956, Part III, Box C6, NAACP Papers-LC.

83. *Los Angeles Herald Dispatch*, 21 June 1956, Part III, Box C6, NAACP Papers-LC.

84. *Los Angeles Tribune*, 29 June 1956, Part III, Box C6, NAACP Papers-LC.

85. Memorandum to Arthur Spingarn, 26 June 1956, Part III, Box C6, NAACP Papers-LC.

collected altogether. It was not just Pacht. Also present were housing activist Frank Wilkinson, suspected of CP ties, along with Franklin Alexander, Healey, and then Negro Communist journalist Donald Wheeldin, and the party organ was sold openly. License plate numbers were taken down covertly, however.⁸⁶ This latter praxis was common. As again, in July 1958, when the CP got donations from over 300 backers at the Embassy Auditorium at 9th and Grand, license plate numbers were recorded, a deterrent to future attendance.⁸⁷

As if they were evading steely pincers, activists had to elude the maw of the state and internal corruption alike. Thus, when E.G. Allen of the Santa Monica branch, sited at 1906 20th Street, indicated in 1957 that "we...adopted a small branch in Bastrop, Louisiana" with "money sent for that branch," one did not have to be a cynic to begin wondering: where was the gift?⁸⁸ Others detected a casually inbred corruption when the NAACP rented office space "in your building,"⁸⁹ as Dr. Hudson was told.

Ominously, surveillance of these antiracist activists was outsourced to ultrarightists, including Robert H. Williams of Santa Ana in soon-to-be infamous Orange County. This "former Counter-Intelligence Officer" was no friend of what he termed "swaggering terrorist organization[s]," a loosely defined descriptor. He found it curious that the NAACP, the "Demo Party and all three top candidates" of the latter were "run by Jewish revolutionaries," with "Anglo-Saxons out."⁹⁰

Unavoidably, UCLA became prey in this febrile atmosphere. By December 1956 there was an investigation of a student, Sheldon Abrams, who had CP literature at the time of his unexplained death. "Communist Plotted Murder" shouted the garish headline of the *Los Angeles Examiner*, noting his "carbon monoxide poisoning" death; apparently, he was in the midst of "plotting to infiltrate the 267 Westwood unit" of the CP, leading to his "strange" testimony before the House Un-American Activities Committee. Assemblyman Byron Rumford and Franklin Williams shed little light but much heat in their inflamed remarks.⁹¹ Chancellor Ray Allen was at the University of Washington when the CP was purged there and was no novice in these matters. He did not appreciate the fact that the Westwood campus was denoted with asperity as the "Little Red Schoolhouse." Dean of Students Milton Hahn identified Helen Edelman of the *Daily Bruin* as a Red. A lingering query was if the NAACP chapter accepting Euro-Americans was simply a cover for CP "infiltration." While testimony swayed back and forth to the time, around 1949, when CP influence was at its

86. File, 15 November 1955, Box 10, F2.400, D-4159, 93-04-12, CUAC Records.

87. Report, 29 July 1958, F3, 93-04-12, D4159, P3, CUAC Records.

88. E.G. Allen to National Office, 12 April 1957, Part III, Box C15, NAACP Papers-LC.

89. Althea Simmons to Dr. Hudson, 20 October 1961, Carton 58, NAACP Papers-UCB.

90. "Williams Intelligence Summary," January 1956, Volume 8, #2, Box 10, F2.400, D04159, 93-04-12, CUAC Records.

91. *Los Angeles Examiner*, 12 December 1956.

"height," poor Abrams became a seeming asterisk in the investigation of his own death.⁹²

This was due in part to the fact that this campus was seen as a happy hunting ground for Red activists. As was the pattern, it was also suggested that CP influence within the NAACP was facilitated by allowing those defined as "white" to join it.⁹³ But what was the remedy? Circumscribe an inter-racial NAACP? Convert it into a phenotypical mirror image of the then growing Nation of Islam?

UCLA was not an island and had to confront pestilential gusts from east and south. This came clear in 1957-1958—when a chapter report numbered 107 members—and two Negro young women were ousted from what were described as "hostess duties" as the football team from the heart of Dixie, the University of North Carolina, arrived in the Southland and it was thought that these beefy men would be "possibly insulted" by the presence of these "Bruin Belles."⁹⁴

As for the CP, Lomax's gloss notwithstanding, it had encountered formidable barriers. Jessica Mitford, the Oakland pillar of the CP and CRC, was disconsolate: "I returned from Europe in the winter of 1955," she recalled, "to find the CRC in shambles," being the "special target of a massive FBI sweep."⁹⁵ Certainly, external pressure drove internal conflict. Mitford told Maya Angelou that comrades did not invite Negroes to a wedding since that would have suggested they were Reds, but it led to fractious internal debate about white chauvinism: What to do?⁹⁶

Mitford had not evaded attention from anticommunist critics, in any case. "Jessica Mitford equals Communist Decca Treuhaft" was their equation for this woman who, it was said, "kept local law enforcement busy." She was formerly wed to Esmond Romilly, they reported, a "nephew of Winston Churchill" who perished during World War II. Her son, "now deceased," had been an energetic worker in the Jerry Newson case, which had attracted the attention of a youthful Huey P. Newton. These scrutinizers found it curious that this son carried the "middle name of Tito," a name also carried by the leader of then-socialist Yugoslavia. Tim Evans, a Negro stoolpigeon at the Smith Act trial in Los Angeles, had become her tormenter.⁹⁷

Mitford had attracted venomous attention especially because of her leadership role with the Communist-initiated Civil Rights Congress and because of the effectiveness of her spouse, attorney Robert Treuhaft. Left-wing attorneys were seen as virtually traitorous insofar as they had turned against the "patriotic"

92. Transcript, 10 December 1956, Box 10, F.2404, D04159, 93-04-12, CUAC Records.

93. Ninth Report on Un-American Activities in California, Sacramento, 1957, SFSU. At the same site see also the Tenth Report (1959) with a focus on universities.

94. Chapter Report, Spring 1958, Part III, Box E2, NAACP Papers-LC.

95. Mitford, *Fine Old Conflict*, 255.

96. Jessica Mitford to Maya Angelou in Sussman, *Decca*, 524-526.

97. *Tocsin: The West's Leading Anticommunist Weekly*, 28 November 1963, CSU-Fullerton (abbrev. *Tocsin*).

anticommunist consensus. This lengthy list included members of the National Lawyers Guild, like Richard Gladstein, counsel during the Smith Act trial in Manhattan which ignited the entire process in 1949, and counsel for the left-leaning union, Marine Cooks and Stewards. The list also included San Diego attorney Louis Katz of the NLG,⁹⁸ and the feminist attorney then known as Ann Fagan Ginger Wood, who worked alongside Treuhaft.⁹⁹ Keeping a close eye on the San Diegans was beautician Ernestine Gatewood, who was part of the CP from 1948 to 1952 before becoming a friendly witness against them.¹⁰⁰

Being underground, furtively switching from one auto to another to reach a predestined site, had created a culture that was not necessarily welcoming to newcomers. Mimeograph machines essential for propaganda production were hidden so well that at a certain point, said Healey, "no one can remember where they are." Yes, this "national paranoia was less pronounced in the party in California than it was elsewhere in the nation"¹⁰¹—but it was hardly absent.

The CP in the Southland had real antagonists, non-clinical diagnoses of paranoia aside. By 1954 Harry Steinmetz had been dismissed from teaching at what became San Diego State University on anticommunist grounds. Born in Seattle in 1898, he was a graduate of high school in the Philippines, as a result of the presence there of his Baptist missionary parents.¹⁰² Later he said that he had been politicized in 1917 in Seattle by Bolsheviks dispatched from Vladivostok and, so moved, ran for Congress in 1948 on the Progressive Party ticket. Before that he had protested the gross maltreatment of Negroes in Southeast San Diego from his post teaching college which had begun in 1930. The notorious paramilitary American Legion "was involved up to the hilt" in his ouster; he had been attacked for spending time in Baja California across the border. A "bill of attainder" had been passed in 1951 to oust him, which Gov. Warren vetoed, though, said Steinmetz, speaking of the future high court jurist, "at every point in his personal career Warren has gone with the establishment." As noted, he then landed at Morehouse College (and its companion, Spelman College) where he befriended the family of Dr. M.L. and Alberta King. His "very dear friend," former California Attorney General Robert Kenny, defended him but he remained bitter toward the American Civil Liberties Union for not performing adequately in his defense.¹⁰³

As Steinmetz was packing his bags to depart the Southland, Paul Orr was doing the same from his (previous) post at Cal Tech in Pasadena. He was ousted

98. *Tocsin*, 6 February 1962.

99. *Tocsin*, 16 October 1962.

100. Testimony of Ernestine Gatewood 26 April 1957, Reel 27, Part I, CPUSA, Subversive Activities Control Board Records.

101. Remarks by Healey in Steven Murdock, "Western American Communism."

102. Attack on Steinmetz in *Tocsin*: 3 (No. 47, 20 November 1961), FC 06 0166.

103. Harry Steinmetz, Oral History.

in 1955 for refusing to answer pointed HUAC queries about his supposed CP affiliations. His spouse, Violet Orr, had been identified by stoolpigeon Louis Rosser before HUAC in 1953.¹⁰⁴

Although the California Emergency Defense Committee had been formed in August 1951 to fight the Smith Act trials, by 1957 Attorney General Herbert Brownell had dragged them before the hanging judges at the Subversive Activities Control Board.¹⁰⁵ Marian Miller of L.A., born in New York City in 1920, had filed reports on the CP steadily from 1952 to 1955 from her perch as a leader of the Rose Chernin Defense Committee, ostensibly defending this Smith Act defendant and also fed the FBI intelligence from the Mar Vista Club.¹⁰⁶

There was significant turnover among this coterie of agents, to the point where a revolving door would have served efficient ingress and egress. Moisselle Trout Clinger of Malibu joined the CP in 1942 on behalf of the FBI but left in early 1956 as internal turbulence descended. Her flypaper was developing literature of interest to Negroes in neighboring Santa Monica. "A good many of these pamphlets," it was said, "were mailed to heads of Negro organizations and to individuals in the Negro area of Santa Monica by our club."¹⁰⁷ Pettis Perry was also involved in the recruiting to the CP of Ira Virgil Clinger of Malibu, who was an FBI source from 1944 to 1956.¹⁰⁸ But as the Clingers were exiting, entering was Alfred Grady Williams, who joined the Watts Club of the CP in early 1956, exiting in June 1962. He paid special attention to Black Communist leader William Taylor, a frequent speaker to Negro cadre, and was present when a comrade was chosen as a delegate to the NAACP convention. He had fought in Korea and had collaborated with the FBI as early as 1952.¹⁰⁹ He was part of a clandestine couple in that Elizabeth Williams of 13008 Belhaven Avenue in L.A. was his spouse and likewise had joined the Watts Club with him, though departing months after her spouse. Her specialty was strategic: CP-NAACP ties, and she filed hundreds of reports to that end.¹¹⁰ Boldly, the distaff member of this couple testified in 1957 that though she had joined the CP in December 1956, she was "now Chairman [*sic*] of my club the Watts Club of the [Moranda] Smith section of the Southern California District." She provided detail on the doings of both

104. *Tocsin*, 27 November 1962.

105. "Brownell v. CEDC," 1 March 1957, Part II: Communist Action and Communist Front Organizations," Reel 66, Subversive Activities Control Board Records.

106. Report on Marian Miller, ca. 1955, Part II, "Communist Action and Communist Front Organizations," Reel 66, Subversive Activities Control Board Records.

107. File, 25 April 1957, Part II, "Communist Action and Communist Front Organizations," Reel 66, Subversive Activities Control Board Records.

108. File, ca. 1956, Part II, "Communist Action and Communist Front Organizations," Reel 66, Subversive Activities Control Board Records.

109. File, ca. 1962, Part I, CPUSA, Reel 27, Subversive Activities Control Board Records.

110. File, ca. 1962, Part I, CPUSA, Reel 27, Subversive Activities Control Board Records.

Charlene Mitchell and Hursel Alexander.¹¹¹ Healey was upset that this "Black woman," a former "friend," testified against her; she was "coming over to my home frequently," said Healey. She cooperated with the FBI since she had signed a loyalty oath denying CP ties and they threatened to jail her.¹¹²

Statewide leaders of anticommunism kept a close eye on Doris Walker, who was to emerge in the early 1970s as part of the Angela Davis defense team. In 1955 she was depicted as "brilliant, capable, dedicated." Then they issued a "grim warning": She was "designated to emerge as the leader of a union which had been conceived at the Lenin School" in Moscow.¹¹³

Healey has recounted what occurred in April 1956 at Manhattan headquarters, where she first got wind of the devastating indictment of the late Josef Stalin by his own party, followed later that year by the Soviet intervention in Hungary, which she termed a "tragic necessity."¹¹⁴ She "dissolved in tears" amidst the four-hour recitation and was so moved that she was "ready to sock" Negro Communist leader James Jackson who, she says, replied "[you] can't make an omelet without breaking eggs," dismissing peremptorily the impact of the report. Yet she also knew that Negroes, perhaps because of their own desperation, were less susceptible to anticommunism and McCarthyism—and perhaps anti-Stalinism too—than others, and this may have been magnified in the Southland, branded a "Maverick District" in any case. Even in 1956, otherwise a year of tumult, she reports that there were 3800 Reds in the county. Inspired by Montgomery—"they walked for freedom, you should do something else for freedom" was the prescription. "We had picket lines. We forced through in our picket lines the hiring; we broke the [discriminatory policy] at Sears Roebuck on Slauson and Vermont, where no Black people were employed...there was a Florence Fair Play Committee that we helped initiate, Florence being an area to the east of my house...north of Watts. Around housing and discrimination. Jim Crow generally—we were very active in those movements."¹¹⁵

Political education continued. The beleaguered California Labor School soldiered on, featuring troubadour Pete Seeger and "blacklisted" screenwriter John Howard Lawson as speakers.¹¹⁶ But in an ominous signal, the school had expired by 1957.¹¹⁷ Still, it was also in 1957 that the punishment of L.A. Smith

111. Testimony of Elizabeth Williams, 6 May 1957, Reel 25, Part I, CPUSA, Subversive Activities Control Board Records.

112. Dorothy Healey, Oral History.

113. Eighth Report, 48.

114. Report by Dorothy Healey to the Southern California District of the CP, 13-14 April 1957, in U.S. Congress, House, 86th Congress, 1st Session. House Report 259, Report on the Southern California District of the CP, 3 April 1959, Box 4, Series II, Gilbert Benjamin Papers (abbrev. Dorothy Healey, April 1957 Report).

115. Dorothy Healey, Oral History.

116. Curriculum 1956, Box 2, Holland Roberts Papers.

117. *San Jose Mercury News*, 18 November 1976, Box 2, Holland Roberts Papers.

Act defendants was reversed by the high court, leading to a temporary ceasefire nationally and a breathing space for the CP.¹¹⁸

Also, part of the California Labor School and dragged before the federal House Un-American Activities Committee as a result, was the queer rights pioneer Harry Hay. This Angeleno was listed as born in 1912 in Worthing, England, arriving in the Southland in 1916. He detailed his labor as a "production control engineer...we make burners and boilers for basic industry." Yes, he spent "two years at Stanford" and "[two] years in historical research," all before teaching music classes at CLS in the Winter of 1950. He refused to answer most questions, but he did give a firm "No" to the prime query: Was he then a Communist?¹¹⁹ Questions about his impending notoriety in the Queer Movement were absent, which was curious since then the ultra-right sought assiduously to tie the CP to this trend. Thus, when a staff member, Burton White, of KPFA, the left-wing Pacifica Radio outlet in Berkeley, was convicted of lewd conduct in a San Francisco theater, they strained to connect him to the CP.¹²⁰

The afterlife of the Labor School also ensnared Alexander Saxton, later a leading historian at UCLA but then identified as "active" not only in CLS but also the "American Russian Institute of San Francisco." He was also pinpointed as "Campaign Director of the Communist run Independent Progressive Party" and viewed suspiciously because of his ties to Trumbo. Even his birthplace, Great Barrington, Massachusetts, seemed to be viewed with aspersion since this was also where the now reviled W.E.B. Du Bois was born. Naturally, his "two anti-free enterprise novels" were seen unkindly.¹²¹

Healey's opponents collected her reports, as if they could benefit from her version of political education. Thus, her 1957 report to the comrades was archived by the Un-American Activities Committee, for it did capture critical trends: "Negro, Mexican and Jewish communities have grown enormously in the last decade.... [the] Negro community has grown from 40,000 in 1940 to approximately 400,000 in Los Angeles County...in aircraft, for example, it is estimated...that almost a third of the working force is Negro."¹²² This was fertile ground for industrial concentration, the alpha and omega of CP organizing.

Given the shakiness induced by the 1956 revelations about Stalin, there was an understandable impulse to revisit what were thought to be verities. This brought a crowd to the Embassy Auditorium on "Columbus Day" 1956 with Healey and Charles Curtis of the Socialist Party debating "America's Road to

118. Pat Blawis to Norman Leonard, 30 October 1958, Box 377, Norman Leonard Papers.

119. U.S. Congress. House. 84th Congress, 1st Session, 1-2 July 1955, "Investigation of Communist Activities in the Los Angeles, California Area," Hearing before the Committee on Un-American Activities, F1.2, 93-04-12, D4L56, P1, CUAC Records.

120. *Tocsin*, 7 April 1964, FC 06 0166 01.

121. *Tocsin*, 6 November 1962, FC 06 0166 01.

122. Dorothy Healey, April 1957 Report.

Socialism." By now it was so routine for such events to be surveilled that Dorothy Marshall, who chaired the event, spoke "for the benefit of the 'undercover brigade,'" those paid to take notes, "the undercover boys who get paid by the word." Nonplussed, Healey unreservedly assailed "Stalin's crimes and atrocities," all of which was "disheartening." As for the dictatorship of the proletariat, it actually meant government by workers and farmers, she maintained. Still, there was the Montgomery upsurge and other signs of growth. Curtis echoed her denunciation of Stalin but the notetaker seemed to be taken with the presence of Marguerite Robinson, a "Negress," and Frank Wilkinson, housing activist suspected of a bearing a Red tinge.¹²³

Later, in 1961, Healey visited the Soviet Union and found "hatred" of Stalin at the higher levels of the party and state, not so much at the grassroots. She continued to hobnob with Soviet leaders, including rubbing shoulders with Nikita Khrushchev and Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko at a Manhattan reception in 1959.¹²⁴

These agents thought they had reason to fret. As of mid-1956, one of their number claimed that the CP nationally had 20,000 members, 69% of them sited in New York State and California, the latter with about 3000.¹²⁵

Even that calculation may have understated actual influence. By the mid-1950s it is likely that the extraordinary screenwriter Dalton Trumbo was no longer a card-carrying Communist. "Yes, Dalton I knew," said Healey as she recalled fondly how before he was "blacklisted" he had a "home in Beverly Hills in the postwar forties, a block long colonial style house," redolent with wealth. "And I remember [CP Chairman] William Z. Foster went to some meetings there when he'd come to town" but "was very disappointed because there weren't any stars there...only the writers—and Foster was an enormous movie buff, particularly a Western movie buff. Foster would walk into a Western movie and without seeing anything of the credits or beginning could tell you exactly who'd written it, everything about the actors who were in it and all the details of it."¹²⁶ Of course, the mere writers who greeted Foster were not devoid of influence, even if their party membership had lapsed.

Among the supposed verities up for grabs in the wake of the commotion induced by the 1956 Stalin revelations was the bedrock matter of the "Negro Question." To that point the idea of a "Negro Nation" had held sway, with this entity possessing the right to self-determination up to and including secession. Opponents charged that this was simply reinscribing Jim Crow. Typical was a piece of widely circulated disinformation from the early Red Scare that spoke in

123. Debate on "America's Road to Socialism," 12 October 1956, F1.2, 93-04-12, D4L56, P1, CUAC Records.

124. Dorothy Healey, Oral History.

125. Report by Thomas Cavett, 11 July 1956, F1.2, 93-04-12, D4L56, P1, CUAC Records.

126. Dorothy Healey, Oral History.

macabre terms about how "10 million white people to be driven from their homes to make room for [a] Black Communist Soviet. American Negro Communists now being trained in Moscow to run black area, thus driving out the whites and enslaving their fellow Negroes" in a "120,000 square mile" region.¹²⁷

In light of Montgomery, the idea took hold that Negroes had decided and opted for a kind of "integration" into the U.S. body politic. What was at play was a more complex calculation involving a decision by the U.S. Supreme Court, backed by a critical mass of the ruling class, to make a halting retreat from the more atrocious aspects of Jim Crow in the face of global pressure impelled by decolonization. As so often happened in this settler society, there was hardly unanimity of opinion on such a profound maneuver, given that it would boost Negroes on the class ladder, potentially eroding whatever real or imagined benefits of white supremacy theretofore garnered by working- and middle-class Euro-Americans. This fear would lead to uprisings in Little Rock in 1957 in the face of school desegregation, slayings in Oxford, Mississippi, in 1962 for similar reasons, and mass revolt in Boston by the 1970s in a similar scenario. Of course, pushing aggressively from below was a Black-led movement, which by 1966 included the self-described vanguard, the BPP.

These irruptions also shook the CP, which responded by revising its traditional view of the "Negro Question" or the "Negro Nation." By December 1958, this revising induced "vigorous opposition to the change" in L.A., according to biased observers in Washington. Healey approved of the change, but the respected Cyril Briggs, the Nevisian who had been part of Communist circles since the Bolshevik Revolution, was opposed adamantly.¹²⁸

Queried by congressional inquisitors in 1957, Briggs was described as 5'10" tall and 168 pounds on his frame; he had gray blue eyes and brown hair. "Subject is very white," said the observer, "stutters very badly, knows Marxism very well...smokes a pipe." He had married Bertha Johnson in 1905 and at that point resided at 4314 Crocker Street. He was asked if he were a member of the Juarez Club of the CP and also asked: "is it not a fact that you were instructed by the Communist Party to lose your identity during the Korean war and in the event of war between the United States and the Soviet Union you were to participate in and carry out Communist assignments in the underground?"¹²⁹ Months later, the harried Briggs had moved to 2517 Fairmont Street.

Briggs was born in Nevis in 1888 but only made it to California by 1944, where he worked alongside Charlotta Bass and her *California Eagle*. He refused

127. "Western Voice," Englewood, Colo., ca. 1947, FC 06 0259 09, CSU-Fullerton.

128. U.S. Congress. House Committee on Un-American Activities. 88th Congress, 1st Session. 31 July 1963. House Report # 631, Box 4, Series II, Gilbert Benjamin Papers.

129. Interrogation of Cyril Briggs, HUAC Investigative Name Series #3, Box 1489-73 [E 3 3-16-5] and Memorandum, 6 August 1957, Communist Party Files, Part IV, Record Group 233, HUAC Records.

to discuss his ties to the CP when summoned by the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1958, where he was accompanied by his attorney, Ben Margolis. Healey also was summoned and too was accompanied by Margolis. She provided the basics—born in Denver in 1914 as Dorothy Rosenblum, spouse of fellow Smith Act trialist “Slim” Connelly but too was otherwise mum. But in a subtle message to the NAACP, Loren Miller was brought to the witness table accompanied by his attorney, former Smith Act attorney Abraham Lincoln Wirin. He provided his office address—2822 South Western Avenue—but too, was terse. His presence alone, however, was seen as unmasking the fiction of a wide moat dividing the NAACP from the CP. In the long run, the most important witness may have been Charlene Mitchell, scion of the Hursel-Franklin Alexander clan and future organizer of the Angela Davis campaign. Her rising eminence was noted when she was chosen to chair a May Day rally in 1957 at the Embassy Auditorium, attended by a respectable 1000.¹³⁰

Born in 1930 in Cincinnati, she arrived in California in the mid-1950s from Chicago. These hearings were designed not only to intimidate but to stir up tensions between and among the comrades given their wrangling over the “Negro Question.” Tellingly, Mitchell was asked if she and Healey got along (they had their differences, and the question was intended to insure that these conflicts would persist). Also testifying was Admiral Dawson, a slightly built Negro comrade born in Summerville, Texas, in 1927 but then residing at 651½ West 59th Place. He was represented by Herbert Simmons, whose status with the NAACP was not enhanced as a result.¹³¹

In August 1958 the comrades placed a full-page advertisement in the *California Eagle* protesting the HUAC hearings in L.A., which had subpoenaed 70, including nine Negroes, among whom were Briggs, Mitchell, Hursel Alexander, and Don Wheeldin. The latter was battered from pillar to post, and the question that had been formulated was designed to elicit a telling admission: “did you resign from the Communist Party on March 26, 1958?” Squirming, Wheeldin refused to appear in 1958 and was slapped with 30 days for contempt as a result.¹³²

Local hearings were not the only manner in which intelligence was gathered on the CP. In November 1959, comrades in the Southland gathered for a convention to devise policy and recommendations. The Park Manor—607 South Western—was the site where 140 gathered, including 83 delegates, 20 alternates and 21 visitors (not including busy surveillants). Prominently featured were

¹³⁰ Report, 1 May 1957, F1.2, 93-04-12, D4L56, P1, CUAC Records.

¹³¹ Testimony of Cyril Briggs, Dorothy Healey, Loren Miller, Charlene Mitchell and Admiral Dawson in U.S. Congress. House. Committee on Un-American Activities. 85th Congress, 2nd Session, 2-3 September 1958. Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1959.

¹³² *California Eagle*, 14 August 1958, *Los Angeles Times*, 10 February 1960, Queries for Wheeldin, in Investigative Name Series #4, Box 1.18-74 9 E3 3-17-3, Record Group 233, HUAC Records.

Briggs, Alexander, William Taylor, Nemmy Sparks, and Rose Chernin, along with Mitchell and Healey.¹³³

As evidenced by the probing of Mitchell over her differences with Healey, sparking or worsening intra-CP tensions was also a goal. Possibly, given the high stakes at issue with regard to the "Negro Question," HUAC hearings were unnecessary in generating inflammation. Still, coincidentally or not, it was after the hearings that Briggs went after James Jackson's view—which was the party view. Briggs's presence in the Southland contributed to the ongoing perception that he represented a "maverick" district, with little understanding of its unique history as once being a part of Mexico, unlike a good deal of the U.S. For Briggs took stern exception to Jackson's view, arguing that "segregation far from decreasing is definitely on the increase"; what motivated Jackson's "rosy prediction" to the contrary eluded him—the argument that the Negro people and the nation in which they resided had opted for "integration." Plus, Jackson, he said, tended to "exaggerate" the role of the NAACP, "led by the right-reformist bourgeois assimilationist currents" in "alliance with [right-wing] Social Democratic trade union leaders, liberals, Zionists and enlightened imperialist elements." As Briggs saw it, this brand of Negro leadership "fears the masses and concentrates upon winning concessions" often via lawsuits. This was a "monstrous distortion of reality" by Jackson, he complained. Briggs was alert to the "mushrooming of Negro Nationalist movements, particularly the Negro Moslem movement and the Neo-Garveyite groups." He stressed, "it is the growing trend at the present time," anticipating the coming of the BPP which drew amply from this ideological well, which would see itself as the inheritors of the legacy of Malcolm X. Briggs took note of the toll exacted by the ongoing onslaught against the National Negro Labor Council: Working-class Negro elements were "demobilized," which then fed the "cult of NAACP worshippers in our Party." Thus, said Briggs, "reconsider our position on left-led centers," i.e., repelling the trend of downplaying their significance, "as has been suggested by unanimous vote by the Southern California District's Negro Affairs Committee." Instead, he said, the CP should "act as a gadfly in the Negro movement. A Left Negro press is urgently needed," and, of course, ditch the idea of the CP as cheerleader for the NAACP, which speared forces to its left at every opportunity.¹³⁴

At times some CP leaders seemed veritably masochistic in their ability to rationalize or ignore NAACP anticommunism. Of course, they would argue that they were merely sympathetic to the dilemma faced by the Association. For even as Briggs was formulating his jeremiad, NAACP opponents had pointed to 10 members of their all-powerful Board of Directors who had "association with Communist fronts," including Channing Tobias, Oscar Hammerstein II, Hubert

133. Report November 1959, Record Group 233, Box 10, William Wheeler Files, LA, OI, CF, HUAC Records.

134. Remarks by Cyril Briggs, November 1959, Box 6, Kutnick Collection.

Delany, Benjamin Mays, Earl Dickerson, and the name that exposed the game: Eleanor Roosevelt.¹³⁵

HUAC may have over-reached, however, a congenital weakness of the ultra-right stretching back at least to the Civil War. For 40 Northern California teachers were subpoenaed, leading to the organizing of SAFE—San Franciscans for Academic Freedom and Education.¹³⁶ The breadth of their support was signaled when even S.I. Hayakawa was seemingly part of their crew. This subsequent leader of the right wing in the 1960s at San Francisco State University, which led to his election to the U.S. Senate, seemed to endorse SAFE,¹³⁷ whose influence extended across the bay, spurring the 1964 transformative student revolt at Berkeley.

135. Attack on NAACP Leadership, 1957, FC 06 0004 09, CSU-Fullerton.

136. Arthur Bierman to Max Lerner, 16 July 1959, Box 2, Arthur Bierman Papers, SFSU (abbrev. Arthur Bierman Papers).

137. Arthur Bierman to Helen Miller, 27 July 1959, Box 2, Arthur Bierman Papers.

Chapter 7

Prelude to Panthers, 1960-1966

Conventional wisdom holds that the somnolent 1950s were somehow followed by the raucous 1960s.

A closer look at the Southland suggests that the 1950s were not so sleepy as imagined—given Smith Act trials and the failure to destroy the CP; mobilization on behalf of those behind the “Cotton Curtain” in Mississippi and Alabama; fightback against attempts to liquidate left-leaning labor, especially stevedores with a base in San Pedro and Long Beach and creeping attempts to desegregate workers in the oil sector; a nascent Queer Liberation movement symbolized by the presence of Harry Hay; the inability to squash the Hollywood left, as represented by the ability of Dalton Trumbo, operating behind “fronts” to not only survive but thrive; and increasing revulsion at the epidemic of police terror that was to lead directly to the formation of the BPP by mid-decade.

* * *

In early 1960 a spokesperson for the NAACP in L.A. was humming a familiar tune. “Charges or allegations that the Los Angeles branch is dominated by Communists,”¹ were proliferating, said Marnesba Tackett, then leading a membership drive where such allegations were like kryptonite. It was “imperative,” she told Roy Wilkins that “you publicly state that the National Office has made no charges or allegations” concerning the CP wielding influence within the ranks.² Similarly motivated was Del Coffey, field representative of the still powerful United Steelworkers union, who also wanted assurances from Wilkins that “charges of ‘Communist domination’” within the NAACP made on the “floor of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor” were bogus.³ This

1. Marnesba Tackett to Roy Wilkins, 26 February 1960, Reel 3, Part 27, Series D, Selected Branch Files, 1956-1965, NAACP Papers-UCLA.

2. Marnesba Tackett to Roy Wilkins, 26 February 1960, Part III, Box C8, NAACP Papers-LC.

3. Del Coffey to Roy Wilkins, 22 April 1960, Part III, Box C8, NAACP Papers-LC.

appeal to Wilkins notwithstanding, it was the left-leaning leader of postal workers, Frank Barnes of Santa Monica, accused of acting contrary to a "loyalty oath," who led a regional conference of the NAACP focused on voting rights, just after the election of John F. Kennedy in 1960.⁴

Similarly, scores of Negro postal workers—just before this confab—protested vigorously the "issuing" of an "official order...based upon the contents of an anonymous letter" charging Negro women employees with prostitution;⁵ this was a reflection of the dearth of political power that the Barnes-led conference was meant to address.

As if prompted by the peanut gallery, Loren Miller, whose past Red ties were an open secret, announced pontifically that "We oppose...Communists and all other enemies of democracy."⁶ Miller was bobbing and weaving like a battered boxer. By early 1963, a comrade from the past—Black Communist Ben Davis—visited him in L.A., just as the FBI had asserted that the CP backed his abortive race for Congress in 1962. Yet an unapologetic Leo Branton, his foil as an attorney, not only averred that Miller "red-baited" himself and Charlotta Bass in league with Franklin Williams and Dr. Hudson, but similarly objectionable was his serving as an FBI "informant" during the 1962 controversy over the killing of Nation of Islam believer Ronald Stokes at the hands of the police, a turning point in Malcolm X's evolution. Besides, in political cases, said Branton, Miller did a "terrible and ineffectual job." Miller's was a tragic case: On the proper path as a young man, sturdy and impelling gusts pushed him into the right-leaning mainstream, which at once compromised him politically. He was a "stoolpigeon"—Branton's bitter assessment—"otherwise why would he testify in private" before governmental inquisitors?⁷ Branton's case was a "control group" showing that another route was possible, including one that would have been profitable materially.

However, if frightened liberals had paused and taken stock, they might have realized that just as the overuse of antibiotics made them less viable in defeating infections, the overuse of the deployment of the "Communist bogeyman" was deriving diminishing returns. This should have come clear when the bourbon-swilling, cigar-chomping Senator James Eastland of Mississippi charged that Chief Justice Earl Warren too was pro-CP.⁸

Yet such announcements meant to assuage right-wing public opinion were fooling fewer and fewer, less and less. This was especially the case since the

4. Minutes, 19 November 1960, Box 1, Robert Singleton Papers, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles (abbrev. Robert Singleton Papers).

5. Letter to Otto K. Olesen, 12 October 1962, Part III, Box A179, NAACP Papers-LC.

6. Statement by Loren Miller, 10 March 1960, Reel 3, Part 27, Series D, Selected Branch Files, NAACP Papers-UCLA.

7. Hassan, *Loren Miller*, 192, 194, 198.

8. *Santa Monica Outlook*, 3 May 1962.

NAACP brass seemingly had made peace with Herbert Simmons, targeted for a purge for years on grounds of being a card-carrying CP member—or at minimum, a dangerous fellow traveler. But in 1960, Gloster Current, the designated hatchet-man in the NAACP hierarchy, communicated with Simmons as if he were the proverbial little old lady from Pasadena—non-threatening and acceptable.⁹

This was a result not just of the high court decision in 1957 on the Smith Act trials, which was interpreted as a victory for the CP insofar as the court suggested that it was unnecessary to repress those of the left—as long as they did not seem to be on the verge of seizing power. But it was also a result of the felt need to circle the wagons by those then besieged by the growing ultra-right in the Southland. It was also in 1960 that an all too typical story appeared in the Negro press: the Compton NAACP was furious when Nazi swastikas, combined with the vitriolic message “Get out of town,” were painted on its office window at 106 North Culver.¹⁰ In early 1961, Clarence Manion, tribune of the ultra-right John Birch Society, addressed a crowd of 2000 at L.A.’s First Congregational Church. By then they were well on their way to boasting 100,000 members nationally, with a significant percentage in the Southland. John Rousselot, a fanatical Bircher, was elected to Congress, serving alongside his comrade Edgar Hiestand with roots in Glendale, their dual presence redolent of the maniacal anticommunism that was inbred during the Red Scare. Max Rafferty, yet another of this ilk, assailed the liberal U.S. Senator Thomas Kuchel on the grounds that he was queer, which—said one analyst—“sounded the death knell for his political career.” Birchers were not above anti-Semitism, indicated when Revilo Oliver addressed 1300 in Orange County in what was termed a “mocking Jewish accent.”¹¹

By 1962 on the ballot was the hysterically anticommunist Proposition 24, which would have further handcuffed the CP to the point of evanescence. It was defeated soundly statewide, 2.9 million to 1.9 million—though it prevailed in Orange County, south of L.A.¹² Pricked to the quick, anticommunists responded by bombing the CP office on Spring Street that same year, leading to an eviction, and it took the Party more than four years to find a new office. This was part of a disturbing and rising cycle, as similarly, repeatedly bombarded was the Citizens Committee Against HUAC. At the same time, burglarizing of left-wing offices to purloin files was common.¹³

By then there were thousands of Birchers in Orange County which—provocatively—named its airport after the incubus of anticommunism: John

9. Gloster Current to Herbert Simmons, 21 September 1960, Reel 3, Part 27, Series D, Selected Branch Files, NAACP Papers-UCLA.

10. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 13 October 1960.

11. Dallek, *Birchers*, 9, 68, 75, 96, 115.

12. Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001, 79.

13. Dorothy Healey, Oral History.

Wayne.¹⁴ The rise of the John Birch Society also reflected the confluence of proximity to wars in Asia—Vietnam and Korea in the first instance—anxiety about China, resultant Pentagon spending, and anxiousness that the “Black Scare” in South L.A. would continue moving southward, just as the “Brown Scare” from Tijuana would continue moving northward.¹⁵

Continuing to wield influence in the region were such reactionary warhorses as Dr. Fred Schwarz of the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade, Birchite W. Cleon Skousen, and shameless fabulist Herbert Philbrick, who maintained a privileged relationship with the *Los Angeles Times*.¹⁶ In other words, the anticommunist upsurge had worked predictably in fueling the ascension of the ultra-right. This was particularly pernicious in the Southland, to the point where Dr. Fred Schwarz, a totem of this trend, spoke confidently in 1962 of “the Southern California School of Anti-Communism,” a virulence that did “splendid work,” he said.¹⁷

In the crosshairs was Dorothy Healey, the so-called “Red Queen.” By early 1962, interviewed by Richard Leonard of CBS Radio, she confided that there were “approximately 1000” Reds in the Southland, impressive in the face of persistent attempts at illegalization. Anticipating the flap involving Angela Davis in less than a decade, when asked if there were any Red professors, “she said that she knew none,” ambiguous wording in retrospect. Nor were there clergy, though she added circumspectly that “my party...has not held any membership records since 1948.” Apparently, this “journalist” called the FBI and apprised them of the interview, but he was not alone: Carlton Cordell of KGO-TV in San Francisco and 620 Bayview Avenue in Millbrae found it necessary to testify against the CP. The two were joined by John Frederick Zorgatz, Jr. of 18403 Arminta Street, a reporter for the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, who informed the curious inquisitors about his November 1961 interview with Healey where she said that she had joined the CP in 1933, became Chair in the Southland in 1950, and was promoted to the National Executive Committee of the CP by 1957.¹⁸ She and her Smith Act co-defendant “Slim” Connelly had divorced in 1958 and she seemed pleased with this split since he was “famous for insensitivity to how others felt—very, very unkind,” bearing a “well deserved...reputation” for a lack of empathy with others, of any kind,” a real demerit for one seeking to move masses. He exhibited “garrulity,” yes, but “when you talk a great deal, you don’t have to reveal very much.”¹⁹

14. Schuparra, *Triumph of the Right*, 50.

15. Roger Lotchin, *Fortress California, 1910-1961: From Warfare to Welfare*, Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2002.

16. L.A. Anticommunism School in Association with Christian Anti-Communist Crusade, November 1960, FCSF F3 3 48, CSU-Fullerton.

17. Fred Schwarz to Bill Gwartney, 30 November 1962, Box 6, Gwartney American Legion and Anticommunism Collection, SDSU (abbrev. Gwartney Collection).

18. Testimony of Richard Leonard, Carlton Cordell and John Frederick Zorgatz, Jr., 18 January 1962, Reel 25, Part I, CPUSA, Subversive Activities Control Board Records.

19. Dorothy Healey, Oral History.

These "journalists" were de facto intelligence gatherers for the FBI. Cordell of his ABC affiliate slyly asked CP leader Albert Jason "Mickey" Lima—with the intent to report back to his FBI handlers—if there were any former Reds in the state legislature in Sacramento or in the clergy or "among our educators."²⁰ This siege by the Subversive Activities Control Board was hardly trivial. According to Healey, there was a danger that it would fundamentally illegalize the CP, constitutional freedom of association be damned.²¹

Karl Prussion was a living symbol in 1962 of the old, and saw that the final conflict would involve a faceoff between Communists and ex-Communists. He was decidedly the latter, having been named in homage to Marx himself. But even before the early 1960s he had become a prominent stoolpigeon and was the author of the betraying "California Dynasty of Communism" which posited that "All Communists in the United States," saw the Golden State as the "pilot area...chosen to be the model Soviet State." This was no chimera, he claimed, since the comrades were "driving toward their goal at breakneck speed" with those like "Gus Hawkins," leading Black L.A. politico at the helm, aided by presumed naïfs like Stanley Mosk, future California Supreme Court justice, who, he said, "still remains the greatest single threat," though future Senator Alan Cranston was not far behind, not to mention Governor "Pat" Brown, a "Red Appeaser" and past leader of the National Lawyers Guild.²²

Despite the flooding of dollars into the NAACP treasury thanks to Sammy Davis, Jr.—by 1962 the woman who answered to "Mrs. Sammy Davis, Sr." was treasurer of the branch²³—there was still flagging enthusiasm for the NAACP program at the grassroots. In 1960 Sophie Feider of 2453 California Avenue in Santa Monica lamented the "poor response of the general membership to meeting notices" with "attendance of less than 5% of the membership," perhaps because there was the "absence of any real educational program" to the point where the "inspiring victory of some of the African countries were [sic] hardly mentioned."²⁴ Even though 1960 was proclaimed the "Year of Africa" as numerous former colonies surged to independence, this hardly caused a flutter in the NAACP since that might have involved relitigating the ouster of the African American who symbolized this epochal departure: Du Bois.

Earlier, O.S. McClellan of 343 West Vernon Avenue was distressed in his communication with Roy Wilkins, telling him that "branch meetings are sickening in that a few powerful people in the community steamroll their will over that of

20. Testimony of Carlton Cordell, 13 November 1962, Reel 25, Part I, CPUSA, Subversive Activities Control Board Records.

21. Dorothy Healey, Oral History.

22. Karl Prussion, "California Dynasty of Communism" FC 06 0037 C08, CSU-Fullerton.

23. Gloster Current to Edward Warren, 30 March 1962, Part III, Box C8, NAACP Papers-LC.

24. Sophie Feider to "Crisis," 5 February 1960, Part III, Box C15, NAACP Papers-LC.

the membership," and as for the attempt by Budweiser, the beer peddler, to encroach in league with certain members: this too was a "farce."²⁵

By 1962 a proposed resolution of the NAACP branch in L.A. stated with regret that membership "failed to show an appreciable rate of growth" despite a population boom of unprecedented dimensions. Though totals fluctuated depending on various factors, this assessment showed a membership of 2570 in 1950; 8149 in 1955; 13,918 in 1956; 5094 in 1958; 10,094 in 1960; and 6660 in 1961.²⁶ Parsing the figures, Gloster Current—a national officer whose devastating anticommunism was as responsible as any for the downturn—acknowledged freely in 1962 that the branch "lost memberships in 1962"; the ironic consolation was the "appraisal by some that the NAACP is losing support throughout the country" and thus losing "about 3300" members in L.A. could be rationalized.²⁷ Matters had deteriorated so sharply that Wilkins was forced to deny retrogressive Mayor Sam Yorty's assertion that the NAACP leader had purportedly averred that the local branch was "the worst" if not "one of the worst" nationally.²⁸

It was easy to discredit the disreputable mayor. The problem was his hearsay was being echoed by NAACP members themselves. One who identified herself as "Gwen" referred to L.A. as containing the "world's most messed up branch," referring to its class bias by terming it the "Silk Stocking group." This was a thinly veiled reference to Norman Houston, insurance industry executive, local powerbroker and branch leader who placed golden handcuffs on the branch by offering the commodious "facilities of Golden State Mutual"—his company—which came with the "usual gangsters,"²⁹ a barbed reference not only to Houston's indelicacies but also a nod to what was to transpire in the city when the savage bludgeoning of the CP was to be followed swiftly by the same befalling the BPP.

By 1963, Dr. Christopher Taylor, a dentist in the mode of Dr. Hudson, had become leader and he found the "branch in chaotic condition, records confused, files unkept, bills owed locally, equipment in need of repair"—all things considered, "demoralizing."³⁰ He did not seem to realize that the debilitating anticommunist policy eagerly pursued had wasted the innards locally. Even the top-heavy NAACP Board, oblivious in the best of times, announced from its ivory tower that there were "long standing problems in Los Angeles and San Francisco," including the "failure to maintain membership growth comparable with population growth; leadership problems; loss of prestige in the community"—all true but curiously deficient in self-criticism.³¹

25. O.S. McClellan to Roy Wilkins, 21 May 1958, Part III, Box C7, NAACP Papers-LC.

26. Proposed Resolution, ca. 1962, Part III, Box C8, NAACP Papers-LC.

27. Gloster Current to Edward Warren, 5 February 1962, Part III, Box C8, NAACP Papers-LC.

28. Roy Wilkins to Dr. Hudson, 12 December 1962, Box C8, NAACP Papers-LC.

29. "Gwen" to Gloster Current, 11 January 1963, Part III, Box C8, NAACP Papers-LC.

30. Dr. Taylor to Gloster Current, 24 April 1963, Part III, Box C8, NAACP Papers-LC.

31. Statement by Board of Directors, 14 September 1964, Part VI, Box C75, NAACP Papers-LC.

UCLA had been a battleground between right and left over the decades, and this too had not changed appreciably by 1960. After what was described as "five years of concentrated effort," a "formal recognition for the campus chapter" of the NAACP was accorded.³² By 1965 a new era for the campus ensued when the basketball superstar soon to be named Kareem Abdul-Jabbar arrived in Westwood, auguring the further arrival of a stylish Black militancy which by 1968 captured global headlines by boycotting the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City. The 7-foot-plus giant, striding away from the concrete canyons of Manhattan, found himself in "South Central L.A.," where he wondrously noticed "people had their own houses with more than two bedrooms and front yards full of grass. Lawns in the ghetto!" Thus, where his native "New York lived in rage and futility, L.A. combined wrath with pride...people wore their Afros with defiance,"³³ the ditching of hair-straighteners, especially among young men, signaling the oft-neglected androcentrism of this new movement.

Yet this was in the context of an obdurate campus administration that—said Robert Singleton, student activist—"kicked our NAACP Chapter off campus," forcing them to affiliate with CORE (Congress of Racial Equality), then perceived as more militant,³⁴ meaning a net loss for foes of progress. Arriving from Philadelphia in the Southland by 1958, Singleton found "trouble" in securing housing, employments—even haircuts³⁵—as if this were a western version of Houston or Atlanta or a realistic portrayal of an oft unacknowledged reality: "Unfreedom National."

February 1960 marked a turning point in that it was then that students at North Carolina A&T University in Greensboro launched protests at segregated lunch counters. And just as protests in Montgomery soon were echoed in the Southland, something similar occurred post-February. For it was then that UCLA students and others began picketing Kress and other retailers in solidarity with events in the Tarheel State. They were showered with "obscene insults," while the local press, it was said bafflingly, "completely ignored the weekly protests" though "patronage [was] diminishing" as customers found it hard to swallow the retailers' rationalization that in Dixie they simply were observing "local customs." The picketers' organ, *The Independent Student*, was peddled at ten cents a copy and was able to have an office at 4276 West Beverly Boulevard. There were pickets downtown every Saturday from 1-5 p.m., on Broadway near 6th Street, and this became a hub for activism and information sharing, including two other causes that fueled unrest: the anti-HUAC protests in San Francisco and the

32. *Daily Bruin*, 23 September 1960, and A.T. Brugger, Associate Dean of Students to Robert Singleton, 22 September 1960, Box 1, Robert Singleton Papers.

33. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Peter Knobler, *Giant Steps*, New York: Bantam, 1983, 129.

34. Undated remarks by Singleton, Box 2, Robert Singleton Papers.

35. Undated LMU Feature, Box 2, Robert Singleton Papers.

ongoing campaign to save the life of death row prisoner, Caryl Chessman.³⁶ The former protests had tremendous knock-on effect across the bay in Berkeley, arguably contributing mightily to the student revolt of 1964.³⁷

Even Maurice Dawkins, the NAACP leader, was stirred to get involved and, likely, students from the otherwise sleepy campus of the University of Southern California in that a march was launched just across the street from Exposition Park to the downtown site.³⁸ Wisely, activists produced bilingual—English/Spanish—leaflets, a must in this former territory of Mexico.³⁹

It did not take long for the then fountainhead of conservatism, the *Los Angeles Times*, to object. By late March 1960, demonstrations had hardly stepped off but shortly an editorial denounced this “wrong tactic for Los Angeles,” both “simply foolish” and “very bad.”⁴⁰

Protesters shrugged off the naysayers and organized a Southern California Boycott Committee, which by September 1960 had a mere \$40 in Security First National Bank with the bulk—\$28—devoted to art supplies for picket signs and leaflets.⁴¹ A climax of a type was reached in July 1960 when the Democratic National Convention—which nominated Senator John F. Kennedy for president, inaugurating a new era—was held at the Sports Arena, again near USC and a growing Black community. Among the picketers were future mayor of Washington, D.C., Marion Barry then of Nashville, with a strong plank for the party platform on civil rights being a major demand.

The injection of this external energy combined with the global spotlight placed on the city marked yet another step forward in the battle against U.S. apartheid. Inspired, UCLA professors such as Robert Bone, Harold Hyman and Council Taylor exited the cloister to address the NAACP.⁴² Soon—mid-June 1960—a Southern California Committee for Integration (SCCI) was paying for full-page advertisements in both the *Times* and the *Sentinel*.⁴³ The SCCI was meeting in the boardroom of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union—albeit a union with right-wing Social Democratic leadership—at 400 West 9th Street downtown. Still, present were a youthful Carl Bloice, who within a decade or so was a Communist journalist and a prime witness on behalf of Angela Davis at her criminal trial; and Aileen Hernandez, a future president of the National Organization for Women. Also present were delegates from the United Auto

36. “Independent Student” Newsletter, June 1960, Box 1, Robert Singleton Papers. See also Hamm, *Rebel and a Cause*.

37. *People’s World*, 21 April 1962.

38. “From the Picket Line” Newsletter, 17 May 1960, Box 1, Robert Singleton Papers.

39. Bilingual leaflet, ca. 1961, Box 1, Robert Singleton Papers.

40. *Los Angeles Times*, 26 March 1960, Box 1, Robert Singleton Papers.

41. Notes, September 1960, Box 1, Robert Singleton Papers.

42. Notes, ca. early 1960s, Box 1, Robert Singleton Papers.

43. Minutes, June 1960, and *Los Angeles Times* and *Sentinel*, 17 June 1960, Box 1, Robert Singleton Papers.

Workers Union and Max Mont—recall he was excoriated by journalist and publisher Almena Lomax as a lodestar of right-wing social democracy with clout in both Jewish and Negro circles.⁴⁴ It was Bloice who had brought students from L.A. Community College—the southern equivalent of Oakland's Merritt and Laney Colleges that incubated the BPP—to picket lines of recalcitrant retailers. UCLA students often were to be found picketing in nearby Santa Monica,⁴⁵ or they could be found protesting in Westwood itself, where barber shops dishonorably failed to attend to the tonsorial needs of Negroes.⁴⁶ Like so many of these brushfire battles, this one too ended in surrender, with the haircutters confessing to their anti-Negro bias.⁴⁷ Yet it was not just barbers who were guilty. In 1960 the UCLA campus newspaper found "Anti-Negro discrimination" in Westwood common; it was a "serious problem," said the NAACP.⁴⁸

Their running up the white flag came after exercises in illogic, typical of the era. Ross Oakley of 1051 Broxton callously told the inquiring Deputy Attorney General for the state, Clara Kaufman, that he balked at attending to Negro patrons "because of their type of hair, it grows very close to the scalp and has an extreme amount of curl," so graciously he "directed them to a Negro barber...three miles from us." He also "refused to cut women's hair," so where was the bias? Yes, he was "confronted with this situation in 1948 when the 'Students for Wallace' picketed our shop" and found it "strange" that picketers then were mostly "white students," unlike in early 1961.⁴⁹ More realistically, Larry Oakley, who also had an interest in this shop, responded by pointing to the "critical world situation" and "easing world tension" by not alienating "American Negroes and Africans"⁵⁰—external factors that were driving change with locomotive-like velocity. This was a prelude to Attorney Kaufman mandating a policy change that would demand that the "State Board of Barber Colleges...teach students how to cut *all* kinds of hair."⁵¹ [emphasis-original]

The rise of CORE in a sense filled a vacuum created by both the attack on the NAACP and this group's inability to fend off anticommunism, which provided it with a reputation for "selling out" designed to disincentivize militant youth. This was evident as early as 1964, when California and New York State contained the most CORE chapters.⁵² At their convention in Kansas City, it was revealed that

44. Minutes of SCCI, 9 June 1960, Box 1, Robert Singleton Papers.

45. "CORE-Lator," April 1960, Box 1, Robert Singleton Papers.

46. *Daily Bruin*, 4 January 1961, Box 1, Robert Singleton Papers.

47. "Graduate Reporter, UCLA," 9 January 1961, Box 1, Robert Singleton Papers.

48. *Daily Bruin*, 4 January 1961.

49. Ross Oakley to Clara Kaufman, 21 February 1961, Box 1, Robert Singleton Papers.

50. Larry Oakley to Attorney General, 7 March 1961, Box 1, Robert Singleton Papers.

51. Attorney Kaufman to Robert Singleton, 28 March 1961, Box 1, Robert Singleton Papers.

52. List of Chapters, Box 4, Beverly Axelrod Papers.

the number of chapters was 68 in 1963—and 106 by 1964, with 60 more in the making.⁵³

Robert Singleton, a bridge between the old (NAACP) and the new (CORE), as of early 1962 was still part of the "Bruin [UCLA] chapter" of the Association, but he made his preferences clear when he spoke disparagingly of the latter's "ultra poor performance this past semester."⁵⁴ By 1961 CORE militants were meeting regularly every second and fourth Thursday of the month at the First A.M.E. Church at 8th and Towne, though they were sited at 4360 Melrose. Then political mitosis asserted itself, and a version of CORE centered in the Venice-Santa Monica area began meeting every other Thursday at Calvary Baptist Church at 20th and Broadway in Santa Monica. Quickly L.A. began sending cadre to Mississippi where, it was said proudly, they had "already taken up their official residence in the Mississippi jail...as many as 13 persons crowded into a cell built for four" where "denial of medicines" was customary. "Morale" was "very high." They "conducted classes" behind bars, accelerating a deeper political understanding of their plight and setting the stage for a deeper militancy that eventuated in the BPP. The "full story" was unveiled in Will Rogers Park in L.A., seeding minds about how the U.S. was exemplary of "Unfreedom National."⁵⁵ The "full story" was supplemented when the soon-to-be martyred Medgar Evers of Mississippi arrived at 3886 Westside Avenue, at the invitation of Alcorn College alumni, to provide gripping reportage.⁵⁶

By July 1961, Robert Singleton, who had earned his spurs in the trenches of UCLA, was vice-chair of CORE of Santa Monica and proudly announced that the "largest group of Freedom Riders ever to leave for Jackson" had departed—"jails are already bulging" (a "minimum of 39 days" was par), it was said—a precursor of what was to come when prison time was seen as a badge of honor.⁵⁷

Sagely, activists had "lined up" backing from West Coast stevedores, routinely scorned by the NAACP on anticommunist grounds, and the United Auto Workers. They even enticed "YPSL [Young People's Socialist League],"⁵⁸ the youth arm of the Socialist Party. Although the NAACP was wary of their San Francisco leader, Dr. Carlton Goodlett, CORE, via the good offices of attorney Beverly Axelrod of the same city, was quite friendly with "Dear Carl."⁵⁹ She was also friendly with Charles Garry, soon to capture headlines as the BPP's chief counsel but who then was still being identified as a CP member.⁶⁰ Their allyship with Dr. Goodlett intersected too in that it was Garry, pointed to as a "Communist

53. Report on Convention, 2-5 July 1964, Box 4, Beverly Axelrod Papers.

54. Robert Singleton to Herb Wright, 27 January 1962, Part III, Box E2, NAACP Papers-LC.

55. "L.A. CORE-lator," July 1961, Box 1, Robert Singleton Papers.

56. Invitation to Dr. Hudson, 5 November 1962, Carton 58, NAACP Papers-UCB.

57. Leaflet, 26 July 1961, Box 1, Robert Singleton Papers.

58. Undated letter to "Dear Bob," Box 1, Robert Singleton Papers.

59. Beverly Axelrod to "Dear Carl," 29 January 1960, Box 4, Beverly Axelrod Papers.

60. *Tocsin*, 17 June 1965.

lawyer," who defended the medic when he was "deported from England" on spurious charges. (Goodlett was also identified as a former faculty member of the "now defunct" California Labor School, a well-nigh "Communist Training Center.")⁶¹

She was also on a "Dear Jim" basis with James Farmer, CORE's premier leader. "You're the only one in the national CORE office who knows me personally," she implored in mid-1963, and "would like to do some work in the South for about a month."⁶² While the NAACP continued to see attorneys who defended Communists as being devilish, Axelrod was also on friendly terms with A.L. Wirin, the lawyer in the 1951-1952 Smith Act trial in L.A.⁶³ While the NAACP remained wary of the "New Left," even though these youth too seemed leery of the "Old Left," e.g., the CP,⁶⁴ Axelrod embraced Robert Starobin, the budding historian then caught up in anti-Jim Crow protests and an emblem of this coming trend.⁶⁵

These newly minted CORE activists were sufficiently audacious to begin ranking "leaders in Negro community" with elected official "Gus" Hawkins and Loren Miller, neck-and-neck, followed by Dr. Hudson, the Reverend Dawkins, John Buggs—a kind of civil rights bureaucrat—and "Colonel" Leon Washington, publisher of the *Los Angeles Sentinel*.⁶⁶

The Dixiecrat sheriffs seemed to relish the idea of bashing Californians. A correspondent of San Francisco attorney Beverly Axelrod, soon to be notorious for her role in helping to spring future BPP leader Eldridge Cleaver from prison, would have validated this perception. "The red-baiting," said this man known as "Vik," was proceeding "pretty heavily" as the "local Gestapo has picked me as 'Head Red'" and unleashed a "smear campaign." He was "really strapped" and thus "made several gas purchases on your credit card." Even the "press conscious" strategy of CORE, which sponsored "Vik" and his fellow activists, may have been backfiring and "might well be the kiss of death."⁶⁷

Nevertheless, CORE had to grapple with pervasive anticommunism, which had yet to disappear by the early 1960s. Arthur Kennedy of the Santa Monica-Venice chapter contacted the attorney general in Sacramento about a "rumor" that "one of our members is or was a Communist Party member and...therefore CORE is a Communist or Communist run organization." Yes, such threadbare accusations were sufficient to sink an organization. But rather than say as much,

61. *Tocsin*, 1 July 1965.

62. Beverly Axelrod to "Dear Jim," 10 June 1963, Box 4, Beverly Axelrod Papers.

63. Beverly Axelrod to "Dear Al," 27 July 1962, Box 4, Beverly Axelrod Papers.

64. Cf. Maurice Isserman, *If I Had a Hammer: The Death of the Old Left and the Birth of the New Left*, Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1993.

65. Beverly Axelrod to Robert Starobin, 26 July 1964, Box 5, Beverly Axelrod Papers.

66. Undated list, Box 1, Robert Singleton Papers.

67. "Vik" to Beverly Axelrod, 6 November 1963, and 19 October 1963, Box 1, Beverly Axelrod Papers.

Kennedy instead stated, "we have no Communist Party members," though he wondered plaintively why "anyone else who says that discrimination is wrong, is a 'Communist' or worse."⁶⁸ The Reverend Carl Hills of the Bible Baptist Church in Santa Monica was more than ready to cut his cloth to fit current fashion arguing passionately that "leaders of CORE have fought against Communist infiltration," though admittedly this effort had "not been marked with success." How so? Rose Schorr Rosenberg, "jailed on July 15, 1961," was "definitely identified as a Communist" by HUAC; that less than credible source also identified as a Red, Earl Dickerson, the National Lawyers Guild leader from Chicago who also happened to be a Negro insurance company executive.⁶⁹

CORE activists were essential since they were to be found in the streets protesting, a reliable and productive tactic often shunned by the NAACP in favor of litigation. This failure was all the more formidable since the NAACP retained a mass base with tentacles reaching far and wide. Exemplary was a September 1961 regional conference involving 84 branches and 35,000 members in Asilomar up north. By this point, the anticommunist beacon, Franklin Williams, had departed for greener pastures and was replaced by the more realistic Tarea Hall Pittman.⁷⁰

In April 1962, headlines trumpeted "Negro Oscar Pickets Jailed" at the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium; the 14 detained included two women as the local industry was denounced,⁷¹ which ultimately led to more hiring of Negroes. Their primary concern then was the despicable depictions of Negroes. Understandably. For Hollywood depictions were spreading like kudzu in a Dixie summer. By 1962 Althea Simmons of the NAACP had to instruct North American Aviation that performance of a "minstrel show" at the plant was wholly unacceptable.⁷² It was left to CORE to picket these cads.⁷³

Minstrel shows at manufacturing facilities defaming and lampooning Negroes were indicative of a wider malaise. That is one reason why by 1961 a Los Angeles Committee for Fair Employment Practices was organized. "We are demonstrating," they announced, "because: in all of Los Angeles there are only three Negro waiters employed on steady jobs in integrated houses," meaning "hotels, restaurants, clubs and bars"; thus, "in this vast restaurant industry, only eight establishments hire Negroes on a permanent basis."⁷⁴ Premier Southland hotels, said the NAACP, "hire Negro waiters only on an extra basis when Negro

68. Arthur Kennedy to Attorney General, 10 February 1961, Box 1, Robert Singleton Papers.

69. Reverend Carl Hills to Robert Singleton, 30 March 1962, Box 1, Robert Singleton Papers.

70. Report on West Coast Biennial Conference, 22-24 September 1961, Part III, Box E1, NAACP Papers-LC.

71. *Santa Monica Outlook*, 10 April 1962, Box 1, Robert Singleton Papers.

72. Althea Simmons to Ann Carver, 11 October 1962, Carton 58, NAACP Papers-UCB.

73. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 15 September 1966.

74. 1961 leaflet, Box 5, Social Movements Collection.

social clubs have their functions."⁷⁵ Predictably, there arose a "United Civil Rights Committee" which initially launched a boycott of Ralph's Supermarket, notably at 8501 South San Pedro Street, because of their lethargy in hiring Negroes and Mexican-Americans.⁷⁶

Thus, in the prelude to the massive March on Washington of August 1963 featuring Dr. King, there was a feeder March on Los Angeles with masses assembling at Olympic and Broadway for a stroll to City Hall, sponsored by the NAACP, CORE, the United Auto Workers, the National Urban League, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the American Jewish Congress.⁷⁷

Yet, despite this strenuous effort, the liberals were loath to acknowledge that their overall strategy, which involved attacking vigorously to their left, was self-defeating. Thus, months after the pathbreaking Watts Revolt of August 1965, Norman Houston—the insurance industry executive who served as president of the L.A. branch—attacked the pipefitters, plumbers, tile-setters, asbestos workers, iron workers, boilermakers, et al., because of "racial discrimination in these unions."⁷⁸

* * *

CORE was also quite busy down the coast. The world famous San Diego Zoo became their target,⁷⁹ after this menagerie was justly accused of fomenting "exclusion of Negroes in practically all of your job categories except that defined as custodian and groundsman [*sic*]."⁸⁰ CORE was acting as a kind of Negro bargaining agent in that their leadership announced that the group was "authorized to be spokesmen for at least eight of the eleven full-time and two part time Negro employees of the Zoo."⁸¹

This occurred after pinning Bank of America to the mat, compelling them to hire more Negroes. Yet, the price was high, said leader Harold Brown: "27 court convictions to secure a 37 percent increase in Negro hiring."⁸² According to Alan Gartner of CORE's headquarters in New York, Brown made an "enormous sacrifice and contribution...in the fight against the Bank of America."⁸³ But

75. Release, ca. 1964, Part III, Box A179, NAACP Papers-LC.

76. Leaflet, 24 February 1964, Box 5, Social Movements Collection.

77. Leaflet, 28 May 1963, Box 5, Social Movements Collection.

78. Norman Houston to Ernest Webb, 8 December 1955, Part III, Box A179, NAACP Papers-LC.

79. Harold Brown to S.D. Zoo, 3 September 1964, Box 2, Harold Brown Papers.

80. C.R. Schroeder, Director of San Diego Zoo, to Harold Brown, 23 September 1964, Box 2, Harold Brown Papers.

81. Harold Brown to C.R. Schroeder, 26 October 1964, Box 2, Harold Brown Papers.

82. *The Independent* [San Diego], 19 November 1964.

83. Alan Gartner to Harold Brown, 13 February 1966, Box 2, Harold Brown Papers.

apparently this bastion was more brittle than imagined, for months after a 100-day campaign Bank of America climbed down and agreed to hire 8000 Negroes and Mexican-Americans although this was not just a San Diego campaign in that 26 chapters were involved in "picketing, sit-ins and coin-ins," i.e., "stalling business by lining up at tellers' windows to get change"—and, yes, getting change.⁸⁴ CORE members chained themselves to the entrance of San Diego Gas and Electric in their campaign to secure Negro employment.⁸⁵ A few days later CORE was slated to hold what was described as the "biggest civil rights rally in this area's history," featuring what could well be termed a measly "800 people" in this conservative bastion.⁸⁶ CORE was aided ably by the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, which by 1964 had an office at 2622 El Cajon Boulevard.⁸⁷

Yet San Diego was, in a sense, trapped. For it sat on the border of Mexico, where California's brand of reaction was not exactly popular. It was left to James Freeman of San Ysidro to ask "why these white Americans can come to Mexico and defy the law of the land" by outrageously seeking to "tell Mexican citizens they have to discriminate against American Negroes." Inexorably, U.S. officialdom were complicit: "do not expect a reply from the Consul as he also has no American Negroes working" in his consulate.⁸⁸

Ineluctably, as CORE in San Diego began to demonstrate effectiveness, local police, said Harold Brown, heightened their instinct to "harass and intimidate," seeking to "frighten the Negro community into submission."⁸⁹ The stress inflicted upon Brown eventually drove him into exile in Southern Africa and instigated internal conflict within the organization. By early 1965 Louis Smith, field secretary of CORE's Western Region, found that there was "something going on in San Diego CORE that defies description" in that "all programs and ideas were flowing from the chair." There were "very few committee reports and these were generally weak." Thus, "all hell was about to break loose" when the "chapter split when Hal Brown pushed to have two members expelled. One was accused of belonging to the Socialist Workers Party," the "other belonging to the Communist Party," their ideological antipode. There was a "clause in our national constitution barring Communists from CORE," augmented by the "claim...that Harold Brown was a dictator." CP and SWP "literature had been distributed," angering some. As for Smith, the overall climate left him "quick tempered, tired [and] confused,"

84. CORE-Lator, September-October 1964, Box 2, Harold Brown Papers.

85. *The Voice* [San Diego], 26 December 1963, Box 7, Harold Brown Papers.

86. *The Voice*, [San Diego], 2 January 1964.

87. *The Independent* [San Diego], 26 November 1964.

88. James Freeman to Harold Brown, n.d., Box 2, Harold Brown Papers.

89. Harold Brown to Wesley Sharp, Police Chief, 29 February 1965, Harold Brown Papers.

even "slipping into some sort of 'trance'" making him "doubt my sanity." A member, similarly disoriented, "attempted to assault me."⁹⁰

Adding substance to the view that San Diego was to the right of L.A., Brown was much more hostile to left-wing presence in CORE ranks than those to his north, terming this "dangerous"; he admitted that "locally the bulk of the Negro people are employed by the Navy, Civil Service and defense plants. These people are concerned about leftist groups," not just himself; hence, if these leftists were not "expelled" then he would "resign."⁹¹

What also seemed to be occurring was a recurrence of the trend glimpsed in L.A. when it was thought that inter-racialism was just a cover for so-called Communist infiltration, indicating that the Black Power tendency which ultimately overtook CORE was also a backdoor method of purging the organized left. As early as February 1965 San Diego CORE was seen by their "First Vice Chairman" Ambros Brodus, Jr., as being in "very serious trouble" as a result.⁹²

Brown refused to back down, asserting during this same tense moment that the "past five months have been very painful and costly." Digging in his heels, he contended, "I cannot be manipulated by the SWP or the CP," and thus "receivership" might be an option to pursue. He was determined to "assure that our chapter is a not a haven and a tool for subversive groups; and we must change the image of our chapter being a 'white' organization fighting for the 'black' people."⁹³

Whatever the case, the unusual concatenation of events that prevailed in the Southland—a muscular ultra-right; a growing Black community; a still influential Jewish community; a left that had yet to be extirpated—doubtlessly contributed to another aspect of uniqueness. Birchers enjoyed explosive growth in the Southland and their purchase extended to some in the Negro community, as indicated by the frequent presence in the region of Lola Belle Holmes and Robert Dresser. There were also all-Negro Bircher chapters.⁹⁴

* * *

More than a decade earlier, the NAACP chose to turn its back on left-wing screenwriters, directors and actors in favor of an alliance with executives, a policy that failed miserably, even by their own account. For as the prestigious Oscar ceremony was unwinding in Santa Monica, the Association announced morosely:

90. Louis Smith to James Farmer, 29 March 1965, Box 2, Harold Brown Papers.

91. Harold Brown to James McCain, Director of Organization of CORE, Box 2, Harold Brown Papers.

92. Ambros Brodus, Jr. to James McCain, 19 February 1965, Box 2, Harold Brown Papers.

93. Harold Brown to James McCain, 20 February 1965, Box 2, Harold Brown Papers.

94. Dallek, *Birchers*, 151, 184.

that "discrimination is rampant [*sic*]"—meaning "rampant"—"in the motion picture industry...only a few Negroes are members of the various unions and guilds. Screenwriters Guild has only 4" and the "Screen Directors Guild has three," while there were "no Negro members in the Screen Producers Guild." Typically, the "only Guild with strong Negro representation is the Building Service Trade which supplies janitors for the studios."⁹⁵

As marchers were on the verge of reaching Washington, D.C., in August 1963, the NAACP announced that it was waging an "all out drive against Hollywood unions" given the "almost total absence of Negro employment."⁹⁶ Fair enough. But since the NAACP had spent years bulwarking these very same right-leaning unions with their moronic anticommunism and had shied away from confronting those with real power—the bosses—progress would require more changes in the objective environment rather than the subjective wishes of the Association. In an apparent paradox, the NAACP's stance on Hollywood echoed that of their ostensible ideological foes. *Tocsin*, their foes' strident mouthpiece, complained bitterly in 1964, "Reds again writing film scripts," pointing the finger of accusation not only at Trumbo, screenwriter of the anti-slavery epic *Spartacus*, but Carl Foreman of *High Noon* and *Bridge on the River Kwai* fame, along with *Home of the Brave* and *Champion*, not to mention *The Defiant Ones* starring the industry's brightest Black star, Sidney Poitier,⁹⁷ still a moving anti-racist enterprise.

Yet the NAACP plodded on, as they mastered the self-evident. Davis Roberts, chair of the Labor and Industry Committee of the growingly influential Beverly Hills-Hollywood branch, learned that "television programming and commercials [have] a tremendous and overweening effect on the social, political, ethical and moral climate of our country," involving a "subliminal indoctrination of the American public, that Negroes and minority groups are and ought to be on the fringes of the society as depicted in television programming." This, said Roberts, with his left arm tied behind his back, "must be fought and exposed."⁹⁸

Filling the resultant vacuum, Singleton and his comrades also frontally tackled the festering sore that was police terror. Chief William Parker, to be bathed in ignominy in a few years, after the Watts Revolt of August 1965, was accused of being "anti-Negro" in 1962. Prophetically, "dire consequences" were predicted unless there was a course correction. Activists were forced to state the obvious: "police brutality does exist in our community." But they were forced into a

95. Special Report by Althea Simmons, ca. 1961, Part III, Box C5, NAACP Papers-LC. In the same Box see also Report on Conference with Edward D. Warren, L.A. branch president, with "Movie Industry," ca. 1961, and H. O'Neil Shanks, Executive Secretary, Screen Actors Guild, to Charles Boren, Executive Vice President, Association of Motion Picture Producers.

96. Press Release, 3 August 1963, Part III, Box A179, NAACP Papers-LC.

97. *Tocsin*, 7 April 1964.

98. Davis Roberts to Herbert Hill, no date, Part III, Box A179, NAACP Papers-LC.

shrinking corner, as these activists, which included the Reverend H.H. Brookins of First A.M.E. Church, felt compelled to assert that the "Muslims" were to be "disowned."⁹⁹ In sum, activists could not consort with either suspected Communists, like Paul Robeson, or "Muslims," like Malcolm X, which could only mean turning one's back on the influential blocs alongside these two men. This dual boycott served to lay the foundations for a force that shunned neither: the BPP.

This disowning came shortly before Minister Malcolm's arrival in town, where he was greeted by what was depicted as "heavy applause" as he castigated "400 years of undiluted hell" visited upon Negroes. Applauders shrugged off the description of the Nation of Islam as an "antiwhite Muslim cult."¹⁰⁰ Alarmingly, County Supervisor Kenneth Hahn averred that tensions had not run so high since the "Zoot Suit" controversy of almost two decades earlier. As was to be the pattern in coming years, there was a spillover in prisons—a recurrent address for young Negro men—as a stabbing occurred. Malcolm spoke before 1100—extraordinary in retrospect in that because of the manipulable and earthshaking political changes in recent years, it would have been difficult for even a Paul Robeson to attract as many. Still, 90 Negro clergymen saying they represented 500 churches, meeting at First A.M.E. Church, denounced him, as Nation believers were invited to depart this gathering.¹⁰¹

Admittedly, the popularity of the Nation created a dilemma for anti-Jim Crow activists. In San Francisco CORE was wondering if they should "oppose Black Muslims openly or ignore them. Should CORE groups sit-in at segregated restaurants operated by Black Muslim temples?"—though this query forced consideration of distinguishing "segregation" enforced with violence by the state and the defensive reaction of victims of this heinousness. Trotskyists also wondered if "SWP [Socialist Workers Party] members" should be "excluded from CORE locals as national apparently wants? CP Members?" Jefferson Poland, the questioner, asked that "Bev" (Beverly Axelrod), the future BPP counsel, should be consulted for answers.¹⁰²

The NAACP was posing similar queries. Tarea Hall Pittman worriedly consulted *Gloster Current* in 1961 when Berkeley student leader Herman Blake—soon to emerge as advisor to Huey P. Newton in Santa Cruz—invited Malcolm X to speak, garnering wide press coverage, especially after the invitation was

99. *Santa Monica Outlook*, 6 April 1962.

100. *Santa Monica Outlook*, 14 May 1962.

101. Althea Simmons to *Gloster Current*, 15 May 1962; see also *Los Angeles Times*, 20 May 1962; *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner*, 21 May 1962; *Los Angeles Times*, 23 May 1962, Carton 58, NAACP Papers-UCB.

102. Undated memorandum from Jefferson Poland, Box 6, Beverly Axelrod Papers. Cf. statement attributed to CP leader Dorothy Healey, October 1963, FBI, 100-4415-60-2, Box 3, Dorothy Healey Papers-UCLA: She attacked the "Freedom Now Party" in the Southland as "fundamentally separatist" and "Trotskyite."

shrinking corner, as these activists, which included the Reverend H.H. Brookins of First A.M.E. Church, felt compelled to assert that the "Muslims" were to be "disowned."⁹⁹ In sum, activists could not consort with either suspected Communists, like Paul Robeson, or "Muslims," like Malcolm X, which could only mean turning one's back on the influential blocs alongside these two men. This dual boycott served to lay the foundations for a force that shunned neither: the BPP.

This disowning came shortly before Minister Malcolm's arrival in town, where he was greeted by what was depicted as "heavy applause" as he castigated "400 years of undiluted hell" visited upon Negroes. Applauders shrugged off the description of the Nation of Islam as an "antiwhite Muslim cult."¹⁰⁰ Alarmingly, County Supervisor Kenneth Hahn averred that tensions had not run so high since the "Zoot Suit" controversy of almost two decades earlier. As was to be the pattern in coming years, there was a spillover in prisons—a recurrent address for young Negro men—as a stabbing occurred. Malcolm spoke before 1100—extraordinary in retrospect in that because of the manipulable and earthshaking political changes in recent years, it would have been difficult for even a Paul Robeson to attract as many. Still, 90 Negro clergymen saying they represented 500 churches, meeting at First A.M.E. Church, denounced him, as Nation believers were invited to depart this gathering.¹⁰¹

Admittedly, the popularity of the Nation created a dilemma for anti-Jim Crow activists. In San Francisco CORE was wondering if they should "oppose Black Muslims openly or ignore them. Should CORE groups sit-in at segregated restaurants operated by Black Muslim temples?"—though this query forced consideration of distinguishing "segregation" enforced with violence by the state and the defensive reaction of victims of this heinousness. Trotskyists also wondered if "SWP [Socialist Workers Party] members" should be "excluded from CORE locals as national apparently wants? CP Members?" Jefferson Poland, the questioner, asked that "Bev" (Beverly Axelrod), the future BPP counsel, should be consulted for answers.¹⁰²

The NAACP was posing similar queries. Tarea Hall Pittman worriedly consulted *Gloster Current* in 1961 when Berkeley student leader Herman Blake—soon to emerge as advisor to Huey P. Newton in Santa Cruz—invited Malcolm X to speak, garnering wide press coverage, especially after the invitation was

99. *Santa Monica Outlook*, 6 April 1962.

100. *Santa Monica Outlook*, 14 May 1962.

101. Althea Simmons to *Gloster Current*, 15 May 1962; see also *Los Angeles Times*, 20 May 1962; *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner*, 21 May 1962; *Los Angeles Times*, 23 May 1962, Carton 58, NAACP Papers-UCB.

102. Undated memorandum from Jefferson Poland, Box 6, Beverly Axelrod Papers. Cf. statement attributed to CP leader Dorothy Healey, October 1963, FBI, 100-4415-60-2, Box 3, Dorothy Healey Papers-UCLA: She attacked the "Freedom Now Party" in the Southland as "fundamentally separatist" and "Trotskyite."

canceled, fueling concerns about "Free Speech" that remained at issue by the time of the student revolt of 1964. Pittman fretted that this would prove to be "detrimental" to the NAACP and that a contagion could spread to likeminded campuses.¹⁰³

NAACP writer John Morsell early on formulated a postulate that was to hold for years. "The Meaning of Black Nationalism," he said—as he attacked two foes with one blunderbuss shot—was that the CP's "Negro Nation" thesis was responsible in no minor measure for the increasing popularity of the Nation of Islam.¹⁰⁴

He was preceded by Roy Wilkins who blasted the "so-called Muslims who teach Black Supremacy" and yet "have gained a following." He was left to juxtapose Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana as a model,¹⁰⁵ although that left him vulnerable on his left flank given the Ghanaian's pro-socialist orientation. Yet an undated editorial in the *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch* countered by hailing the Nation of Islam and exhorted, "Let's try Islam,"¹⁰⁶ a response to the dilly-dallying of the NAACP, while making the CP radioactive.

As the overheated remarks of Wilkins suggested, Black liberals were befuddled by what appeared to be the sudden popularity of the Nation of Islam, though it was apparent that they had built upon the preexisting currents embodied in the movement led by Marcus Garvey in the World War I era. These forces' alignment with Tokyo led to a downturn in the ashes of Hiroshima and Nagasaki but they were back on the upswing as groups embodied by Robeson came under churlish assault.¹⁰⁷

Thus, Althea Simmons of the NAACP went into panic mode after the shooting of "the Muslim by a police officer." Dr. Hudson went ahead with his "keynote" at a local Baptist church with 1300 present but, she said with wonder, "people at the meeting called for Malcolm X." Threading the needle, the Association was "supporting the rights of the Muslim, without embracing their doctrine"—but even this weaseling was "shaking everybody up," she confessed, as her office was "getting a considerable number of calls about it."¹⁰⁸

This cyclonic reaction was generated in part by the pearl-clutching response of the bourgeois press. KNX, the local radio outlet, skewered the "Black Muslim racial and religious cult" which on 27 April 1962 was involved in a "bloody battle in the 5600 block of South Broadway."¹⁰⁹ Apparently this editorialist did not realize that highlighting the muscular reaction of the Nation of Islam, when the

103. Tarea Hall Pittman to Gloster Current, 9 May 1961, Part III, Box E2, NAACP Papers-LC.

104. John Morsell, "The Meaning of Black Nationalism," February 1962, Carton 58, NAACP Papers-UCB.

105. Statement by Roy Wilkins, 5 August 1959, Carton 58, NAACP Papers-UCB.

106. Undated editorial, Carton 70, NAACP Papers-UCB.

107. Home, *Facing the Rising Sun*, passim.

108. Telephone Account from Althea Simmons, 15 May 1962, Part III, Box C8, NAACP Papers-LC.

109. Editorial-KNX radio, 9 May 1962, Part III, Box C8, NAACP Papers-LC.

police dared to violate their mosque and believers alike, was akin to an advertisement among Negroes of the virtues of this grouping, confirming their nagging belief that non-violence alone was insufficient to force a retreat of the bloodthirsty aggressors. This editorialist, broadcasting on behalf of a news station, was increasingly surrounded on the dial by a plethora of ultra-rightists, among whom was Paul C.R. Peterson and his "Awake America for Christ," who routinely admonished the "heresy of the National Council of Churches," which was all too "sympathetic to the Communist program" and ignored "real sources of hatred: the Communists, the Black Muslims, the Nazis and other leftist organizations." His velvet tones reached into homes and cars buzzing down freeways in the Southland, reaching as far as Bakersfield, Fresno and San Francisco.¹¹⁰

Birchers produced films that were seen by thousands nightly. In 1964, when the number of their candidates seeking office in California skyrocketed, intimidated Republicans refused to distance themselves from the Society. Matters reached a noisome crescendo that year during the GOP convention at the Cow Palace in San Francisco, where Governor Brown, among others, detected the "stench of fascism," pointing to "strong arm tactics, bomb threats and bombings" among other "Nazi methods."¹¹¹

Much has been made of the anti-Jim Crow movement and the church, but pro-Jim Crow forces also had their base in this institution. "Furnish[ed] (by the FBI)," said *Tocsin*, were "reports on local church[es] infiltrated [by] Communists," including by J. Fred Riggins of Redondo Beach, supposedly "an accomplished hypnotist" and expert in "mind control techniques" which, it was believed, were necessary in order to convince the deluded in the pews of the validity of socialism.¹¹²

A hallmark of the 1960s was the agonizing retreat away from the more egregious aspects of U.S. apartheid under the glare of unrelenting global pressure. In the afterglow of liberal self-congratulation—and self-deception—as to how the nation was supposedly finally redeeming the purported promise of the founding, oft neglected was the fierce pushback, even as it manifested in Little Rock in 1957 and Boston in the 1970s—or throughout the Southland. Finding its way to Orange County was the "First National Directory of 'Rightist' Groups" with "over 3400 listings" by 1965, knocked together by Noontide Press of L.A., whose specialty was plague-like anti-Semitism. Byram Campbell, who focused on "American Race Theorists," diverged from the liberal consensus in his "analyses" of the "arguments of [Gunnar] Myrdal, [Otto] Klineberg...Ashley-Montague and other multi-racialists." He was, in his telling, "exposing the fallacious precepts on which their absurd race mixing theorists are based." In limning the pertinacity of "Race and Social Revolution," he made a special plea "for all who are interested

110. Brochure of the Reverend Paul C.R. Peterson, n.d., FC 06 0170-06, CSU-Fullerton.

111. Dallek, *Birchers*, 124, 126.

112. Report, early 1960s, FC 6 0193 05, CSU-Fullerton.

in the preservation of the white, Caucasian or Aryan race" to flock to his banner, as well as those of fellow blockheads including Roger Pearson and his topics, like "Eugenics and Race" and "Blood Groups and Race," and the old chestnut Lothrop Stoddard, then tied to "Mankind Quarterly."¹¹³

University of California flagships also were subjected to the contagious impact of proliferating anti-racism and radicalism. This ineffable reality had occurred to the statewide Un-American Activities Committee, which also in 1961 wondered why UC Los Angeles cooperated with their investigations but not UC Berkeley. They should have consulted their own files for an answer. For it hadn't been so long before that both campuses were deemed to be Bobbsey Twins of subversion. After a defenestration of "radical" forces on the Westwood campus, they were brought to quietude, but this was bound to be ephemeral. In any case, these surveillants too were irked by the "Negro Muslims" then "growing at an amazing pace." They praised a journalistic analysis of this phenomenon by the dissident Negro writer William Worthy, just as they began to worry about their growing presence in the then burgeoning state prisons. By then Franklin Williams, promoted to deputy attorney general of the state after he showed his political mettle in routing Communists (at least temporarily), was recruited once more to provide remedies, though this would prove to be a more problematic assignment. Just as the suspected hand of Moscow was espied in the 1950s, now in the 1960s there were "charges that Islamic leaders of Arabia and the Middle East have provided financial backing and expert guidance" to these "Negro Muslims." Yet these external forces were largely U.S. allies, which left the snoopers to look toward the old reliable: "charges of pro-Soviet and pro-Communist orientation of the Negro Muslims" were bruited. They were reduced to quoting Black Communist leader Claude Lightfoot, and his estimate of 70,000 believers in these various groups, thought to be a "conservative" estimate. They were left to cite his discerning analysis that their ranks "will grow in proportion to the weaknesses displayed by other forces." Did this mean the state should call a unilateral ceasefire in their ongoing attempt to undermine the CP? Ominously, it was in March 1961 that a grand jury in San Francisco indicted Edward Moore, a Negro also known as Bernard X—"leader of the Muslims in the Bay Area"—for failure to report for military induction.¹¹⁴

So, they should put him behind bars so he could more effectively proselytize in a confined space? That was to be the self-defeating "remedy" in coming years, metastasizing the original malady. Even without their "own goal" of imprisoning more Negro men, soon the surveillants were reporting worriedly that the "Negro Muslims" produced "regular radio programs over several stations in Southern California" and numerous outlets in the north as well.¹¹⁵ According to a San Diego

113. Byram Campbell, "American Race Theorists," ca. 1965, FC 06 0192 04, CSU-Fullerton.

114. Eleventh Report of Un-American Activities Committee in California, Sacramento, 1961, SFSU.

115. Twelfth Report of Un-American Activities Committee in California, Sacramento, 1963, SFSU.

source, the Nation of Islam could be found on 32 radio stations nationally. This was in 1963 when the Negro journal, *The Independent*, had begun to carry huge articles on their doings with evocative photos with affronting captions like "Bloodshed is inevitable" and "all whites are devils" and "Christianity creates slaves." Though they pointedly did not advocate overthrow of the U.S. government,¹¹⁶ making them in a sense less dangerous than those so accused.

The NAACP was well aware of this emerging trend. Springing into action, given the command from on high, Dr. Hudson demanded that Roy Wilkins provide a stern "statement" on "all subversive groups," and more particularly on "the Muslims."¹¹⁷ The NAACP found itself in a two-front war against Communists and religionists alike, a wrongheaded approach designed to drain membership. However, one front in the war was taken more seriously, insofar as nuclear-armed Moscow and its allies were seen as the larger threat. Hence *Tocsin*, billing itself as "the West's leading anticommunist weekly," kept a closer eye on Moscow and those suspected of being in its sphere. For example, it showed keen interest in the early 1964 rally in L.A. of the antiwar Women Strike for Peace and their guest, Dr. Linus Pauling.¹¹⁸ When Black Communist leader Henry Winston—who famously lost his eyesight, but not his vision during a stint in federal prison—returned in 1964 from an extensive "two and a half years" medical treatment in Moscow and spoke in Manhattan alongside the actors Ruby Dee and Ossie Davis, *Tocsin* took note.¹¹⁹

The controversy surrounding the killing of Ronald Stokes and the concomitant visit of Malcolm X led to a downtown rally under the provocative heading, "Does the Negro Get Justice?" The site was 111 North Hill Street at the courthouse. Supporters were encouraged to tune in to 93.5 FM for updates on Sundays at 7:30 p.m. and to "Read 'Muhammad Speaks,'" their principal organ. Helpfully, there was "home delivery" of the latter. Yes, visit the mosque at 5606 South Broadway, Fridays at 8 p.m. and, conveniently for those continuing to seek spiritual sustenance, on Sundays at 2 p.m.¹²⁰

As the CP and their union allies suffered losses, the Nation of Islam—like a seesaw—rose accordingly. An inflection point took place in February 1963 when a panel on "Alternative Paths to Negro Freedom" convened at First Unitarian Church at 2936 West 8th Street, featuring Terry Francois, a mainstream leader from San Francisco, F. Daniel Gray of CORE, Ben Davis, the CP leader, and Minister John Shabazz of the Nation of Islam.¹²¹

116. *The Independent*, 22 August 1963, Box 7, Harold Brown Papers.

117. Dr. Hudson to Roy Wilkins, 10 May 1962, Part III, Box C8, NAACP Papers-LC.

118. *Tocsin*, 12 February 1964.

119. *Tocsin*, 7 April 1964.

120. Leaflet, ca. 1962, Carton 70, NAACP Papers-UCB.

121. Leaflet, 22 February 1963, Box 5, Social Movements Collection.

By 1963 there appeared to be cross-fertilization between nascent Black Nationalism and anticommunism—at least that was the implication of a publication “dedicated to fight Communism” that heaped praise on the “Negro leader” who speaks the truth, referring to Donald Warden, “Chairman of the Afro-American Association,” an early influence on the Black Panthers and associate of expatriate Saudi students in the Bay Area. *Heads Up*, the periodical in question, saluted his appeal to “stop using bleaching cream and hair straighteners” and his heroizing of “racial pride.” The paper seemed more interested in his reprimand of Dr. King and the “Red Educators” who saw “Georgia Negro Colleges” as the “main target,” with Harry Steinmetz, purged from San Diego State University, then in Atlanta as Exhibit A.¹²² Also keeping tab on Golden Staters embarking on a new life in Atlanta, *Tocsin* monitored Isobel Cerney, once of the now defunct California Labor School but now at Morris Brown College in Steinmetz’s Atlanta. Formerly of Stockton College in California, she was a candidate for the U.S. Senate in 1954 on the Independent Progressive Party ticket.¹²³

Unfortunately, the CP, with its paeans of praise for slaveholding founders like Thomas Jefferson, and the NAACP, with its capitulation to liberalism of a similar vintage, opened the door for an individual or group who could articulate the underpinnings of Negro pain and anxiety: Enter Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam, then the BPP, which sought to bridge this yawning gap between Black Nationalism and the radical left.

Down the coast in San Diego, this conservative redoubt continued to reflect the problems that ensued in the face of an anticommunist capitulation. Hartwell Ragsdale was vice president of the NAACP branch and was busily coordinating the picketing of “local variety stores” on anti-Jim Crow grounds. But alas, “our local newspapers have not given us...much assistance in our fight and the Negro newspaper has done all [it] could to fight the NAACP and our program.”¹²⁴ For its part the *San Diego Lighthouse* criticized the NAACP from a vantage point adumbrated by Cyril Briggs, the Black Communist intellectual in L.A. who warned against ignoring the growing Black militancy that was to blossom by mid-decade. Its editorial wondered why the Manhattan leadership of the NAACP “fired a [branch] president for stating that Negroes should fight fire with fire to protect their homes, their life and their families.” Appended was a hideous picture of a Negro lynching victim with the caustic albeit telling caption, “No, this was not in Communist Russia!”¹²⁵—which at once interrogated severely the past decade of anticommunist witch-hunts.

122. *Heads Up*, April-May 1963, FC 06 0037 C08, CSU-Fullerton.

123. *Tocsin*, 8 June 1964. See also Donald Warden, “Walk in Dignity: The Other Side of the Civil Rights Agitation,” ca. 1964, AAMLO.

124. Hartwell Ragsdale to Roy Wilkins, 5 April 1960, Part III, Box E29, NAACP Papers-LC.

125. *San Diego Lighthouse*, 1 April 1960, Part III, Box E29, NAACP Papers-LC.

The global scene rarely intruded in the Negro press. This was part of the process that led to the truncheoning of Robeson and his internationalism: anti-Jim Crow concessions in return for fealty on foreign policy. Still, when the world did intervene it was not necessarily incongruent with the snowballing Black Nationalism. For days before the assassination of President Kennedy, *The Independent* of San Diego ran a front-page cartoon featuring China vs the USA and USSR—with the Asian giant's atomic bomb termed the "equalizer."¹²⁶ This fed into the growing idea that China was the representative of the "colored," a throwback to admiration of pre-1945 Japan, an occlusion of Mao Zedong's coming entente with President Nixon that both destabilized national liberation movements and derailed the BPP.

This was a bold assertion given the overall climate. By 1961, the *Los Angeles Examiner* featured a full-page advertisement proclaiming "Anti-Communism Week" backed by a mayoral proclamation. Scores of Southland mayors cosigned, joined by various celebrities and personalities, including crooner Pat Boone, cowboy TV star Roy Rogers and his spouse Dale Evans, actor Cornel Wilde, propagandist Herbert Philbrick, and B-list actors en route to higher office, Ronald Reagan and George Murphy.¹²⁷ Fervent anticommunist actor John Wayne hailed the film *Communist Accent on Youth* financed by Pepperdine College, then in the process of fleeing its increasingly Black South L.A. neighborhood for the homogeneity of Malibu.¹²⁸

The ampler point was that Hollywood stars had national, if not global impact, but their resonance in their backyard was even more concentrated, helping to explain why such fuddy-duddies as Murphy and Reagan were able to ascend to the highest level of statewide, then national politics.

Demographically, San Diego may have differed from Malibu, but it was neither simple nor easy to get to the right of this naval fortress. It was not unusual when longtime Congressman Robert Carlton Wilson casually mentioned his "discussion this morning with Allen Dulles," the tweedy, pipe-smoking Director of the Central Intelligence Agency then up to his keister in all manner of shenanigans and dirty deeds.¹²⁹

Wilson himself was no tyro in this regard, to the point that in October 1961, when George Whitney, vice president and general manager of KFMB, Channel 8 on your dial in the city known as "Dandy San Diego," was quick to tell the congressman that "for three consecutive and uninterrupted hours" there would be broadcast the misinformation barrage known as "Hollywood's Answer to Communism." A "similar program was done in Los Angeles a few weeks ago,"

126. *The Independent* [San Diego], 12 November 1963, Box 7, Harold Brown Papers.

127. *Los Angeles Examiner*, 18 August 1961, Box 6, Gwartney Collection.

128. John Wayne to Dear Friend, 5 July 1961, Box 6, Gwartney Collection.

129. Robert Carlton Wilson to Grace Lawrence, 8 March 1961, Box 164, Robert Carlton Wilson Papers.

he said brightly," and met with tremendous success." The usual suspects were to appear on the boob tube, including Dr. Fred Schwarz, W. Cleon Skousen, Pat Boone, the scandal-ridden Sen. Thomas Dodd of Connecticut, washed-up actors like Irene Dunne and Pat O'Brien, the faux folksy entertainers James Stewart, Van Williams, Tex Ritter and Walter Brennan, the myrmidon of malevolence John Wayne, TV enervators Ozzie and Harriet Nelson, ventriloquist Edgar Bergen, the closeted Rock Hudson, the master of horror Vincent Price, and Nat King Cole, the Negro star who seemed out of place in this inelegant company.¹³⁰

Wilson's anticommunist bona fides were so solid that when the La Jolla matron who answered to the name of Mrs. Fred Henson wanted to know—"Thanksgiving Day 1960"—if publisher Bennett Cerf and TV newsman Chet Huntley were free of Red taint, she asked the congressman.¹³¹

In short, the formidable presence of Congressman Wilson was representative of the wider point that in San Diego anticommunism was hardly a minor belief system—which did not bode well for progress.

Still, despite the robust ministrations from antagonists and would-be allies alike, the CP had yet to dissolve. In May 1964 Dorothy Healey addressed 4000 students at "California State College at Los Angeles" and 1400 more at "Nevada Southern University" in booming Las Vegas, with her antagonists observing mournfully that "demonstrations of opposition were all but invisible."¹³² The CP's ranks had reportedly shrunk tremendously, barely exceeding 1000 in the Southland and 5000 nationally—though this region holding 20% of members but far less than that percentage population-wise, is noteworthy. Healey said subsequently that the *Los Angeles Times* and other heavyweights opposed her speaking at UCLA.¹³³

What was happening was that the anti-Jim Crow movement was gaining altitude as represented by passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, a defeat for the ultra-right, and in its wake, the CP began to break out of its isolation, engineered in the first instance by this very same ultra-right. This reality materialized when William Taylor, a leading Black Communist by way of New Haven and Cyril Briggs's Nevis, ran for the influential post of Supervisor of L.A. County. He had won plaudits as early as 1932, when he accompanied the mother of political prisoner Tom Mooney in her European tour, then served with distinction during the Pacific War.¹³⁴ The Mooney initiative attracted dismissive and furious

130. George Whitney to Congressman Wilson, 11 October 1961, Box 164, Robert Carlton Wilson Papers.

131. Mrs. Fred Henson to Congressman Wilson, November 1960, Box 164, Robert Carlton Wilson Papers.

132. *Tocsin*, 8 June 1964.

133. Dorothy Healey, Oral History.

134. Leaflet, ca. 1964, Box 594, Kenneth Hahn Papers, Huntington Library (abbrev. Kenneth Hahn Papers).

attention from *Tocsin*, asserting that this was "one of the earliest hate America campaigns."¹³⁵

Co-chairs of Taylor's noteworthy campaign were Healey and Pettis Perry, and his headquarters were sited at 1205 Jefferson Blvd. There was widespread trawling in the form of doorbell ringing, canvassing entire neighborhoods. In one week alone 10,000 leaflets were distributed. Taylor unleashed a barrage of invective at his opponents, including the point that the Sheriff's office was "headed by a [Barry] Goldwater Republican," a barbed reference to the Arizonan and rock-ribbed reactionary, then challenging President Lyndon B. Johnson for the White House. Peter Pitchess, soon to gain notoriety after his pistol-packing forces were implicated in Negro slaughter during the Watts Revolt of 1965, was co-chair of the Southland campaign of the GOP standard-bearer. Taylor demanded "minority representation" at the highest level of the county, which devolved to a vote for himself. He zeroed in on the Negro unemployment rate—double the 6% rate.¹³⁶

The "Sponsor's Certificate" for Taylor was signed by Healey of 1733½ West 8th Street, Charlene Mitchell of 1146½ South Serrano, and Franklin Alexander, 4850½ Mascot Street¹³⁷—the latter two in the vanguard of the Angela Davis case to emerge in a few years.

Although more than a decade had been expended in bowling over the CP, by 1964 a mainstream periodical noted nervously that this race "should be watched" since the "district is heavily populated with Negroes and Mexican Americans,"¹³⁸ a tacit admission that the party duopoly—Democrats and Republicans—had ill served these growing constituencies, to the detriment of the anticommunist cause, no tiny issue as war in Indochina was percolating. More to the point, the more flinty *Valley Times* sniffed haughtily, "We are not amused."¹³⁹ This political standoff created an opening for the Negro weekly *Sentinel*, which had been catapulted into prominence in the initial instance by operating just to the right of Charlotta Bass's *California Eagle*, no longer operative. Now it embraced the incumbent, Taylor's opponent Kenneth Hahn, in ever more laudatory "tribute[s]."¹⁴⁰ Leon H. Washington, who prefaced his name with the honorific "Colonel," pledged his "friendship" with Hahn, an "ardent civil rights champion." This busily feinting Negro weekly was "with him 100 percent."¹⁴¹

Then the gloves came off, and a bloody brawl ensued. Leading the way was the soon to be inoperative *Santa Monica Evening Outlook*, apparently unaware

135. *Tocsin*, 7 April 1964.

136. *People's World*, 2 May 1964, Box 594, Kenneth Hahn Papers.

137. "Sponsor's Certificate," 1964, Box 594, Kenneth Hahn Papers.

138. *Evening Outlook* [Santa Monica], 8 May 1964.

139. *Valley Times*, n.d., Box 594, Kenneth Hahn Papers.

140. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 7 May 1964.

141. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 30 January 1964.

that its failure to adapt to changing conditions left it as its own gravedigger. "Communists are using every lie, distortion, innuendo and deception," it declared petulantly, in mounting "their first major assault on the ballot box in [L.A. County] in more than 10 years." Yet failing to absorb the meaning of their beatdown, they were beginning to "gnaw like a rodent...poisoning the air with charges that free American institutions oppress and enslave minorities." The mandate was clear: "Drive [them] from the ballot box and into the cesspool of oblivion."¹⁴² This aggressive tone was reflected in the Hahn campaign as he received research material on the CP from the rightist "Fire and Police Research Association."¹⁴³

Quite dangerously, Hahn, who had substantial Negro support, cooperated with the most vigorous anticommunist forces. Just after his stunning race against Taylor, "upon motion" by Hahn, county supervisors were presented with a "Special Report" on the "problem created by recent" high court cases on the CP that supposedly handicapped the "twenty year fight of the County of Los Angeles against subversion and Communism."¹⁴⁴

Also part of the Hahn circle were the sweater-clad crooner Pat Boone, baseball mogul Walter O'Malley, and anticommunist personification, Dr. Fred Schwarz.¹⁴⁵ Boone, a real player politically, told "Kenny" he was "grateful for your friendship" after receiving the supervisor's research packet on Taylor that left him shaken and "shaking my head in disbelief," which left him desirous of allotting a "thorough shellacking" to the CP.¹⁴⁶

The *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner* seemed insulted that Taylor would dare to run against Hahn, with their clarion call for Negro representation derided deprecatingly as no more than an "appeal to racial elements." Did Taylor not realize that Hahn had "received the highest percentage of the vote ever given a county [supervisor] 85.5 percent" in 1960? How dare Taylor embark on this fool's errand, was the implicit message.¹⁴⁷ The Communist organ responded by hammering on the issue that would erupt in a transformative manner in August 1965, days after passage of the Voting Rights Act, thought to be the Magna Carta for the Negro after centuries of struggle. "Tensions rise," it said portentously in April 1964, as "cops get tough."¹⁴⁸

Signaling the national importance was the fact that the so-called paper of record, the august *New York Times*, weighed in. In apparent disbelief was its assertion "Communist to be on coast ballot"; amazement since "no avowed member of the Communist Party has been on an election ballot anywhere in the

142. *Santa Monica Evening Outlook*, 11 May 1964.

143. Research Material, 1964 Box 594, Kenneth Hahn Papers.

144. Report from Harold W. Kennedy, 19 August 1964, Box 11, Series III, Gilbert Benjamin Papers.

145. Campaign material, 1964, Box 595, Kenneth Hahn Papers.

146. Pat Boone to "Kenny," 1 June 1964, Box 595, Kenneth Hahn Papers.

147. *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, 25 May 1964.

148. *People's World*, 18 April 1964.

United States for the last seven years," and that this would occur in the Southland was worthy of note. That the CP "has not been listed on California ballot since 1942" was their not altogether accurate allegation (recall the vote totals racked up by Smith Act defendants just before being tried). Of the 450,000 registered voters in the district, "thirty five to 40 percent are Negroes" and though a "Negro weekly has rejected his advertising," the 54-year-old "corpulent and cheerful" Taylor had a puncher's chance; national party membership was listed as 10,000 down from 80,000 at its "peak" in 1944. Taylor was cited for the notion that he expected a "maximum of 50,000 votes," quite ambitious given the temper of the times.¹⁴⁹

Taylor wound up getting 13% of the vote and was aided immeasurably by the endorsement he received from the Black Nationalist *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, validating the postulates of Angeleno Cyril Briggs's analysis of the "Negro Question,"¹⁵⁰ whereas the NAACP-oriented *Sentinel* would not even accept his advertising—though the CP's theory of the case leaned toward the latter and away from the former, i.e., influenced by CP leader James Jackson, with deep roots in Dixie, notably Virginia with a stint in Alabama, there was immense Red sympathy for the anticommunist NAACP, less so for burgeoning Black Nationalism. Taylor's backers were angered by the fact that news radio station, KNX, canceled two of his paid broadcasts; there was an "almost complete press, radio and TV blackout," it was said. Uniformed members of the Nazi Party paraded in front of his headquarters. Naturally, his endorsement by Charlotta Bass received minuscule attention.¹⁵¹

Clearly there was upset. As one journal put it, Taylor "hammered hard on the civil rights issue," meaning anti-Jim Crow and the dire need for Negro representation. There was "emotionalism engendered by this extremely volatile social issue."¹⁵² In other words, if equality was the stated goal, as was said repeatedly, why were Negroes underrepresented in the corridors of political power? This had occurred to Dr. John Lechner, executive director of the Americanism Educational League, confiding to Hahn that "someday I will tell you of the opposition I had on the part of two Negro members" when he wanted to pillory Taylor but had to retreat since "we did not want to create a crisis" over this "traitor."¹⁵³ This raised larger questions about non-Communist Negroes and what was to be done with them. Martin Pollard, an affluent Cadillac dealer in Sherman Oaks, was of like mind, informing "Dear Kenny" that a "lot of Negroes" were "so imbued with the philosophy that only a Negro in public office will give their race a fair break"—a view held for reasons that eluded him—"that they would vote for 'Mr. K.' [Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev] if his color was black

149. *New York Times*, 17 May 1964.

150. *People's World*, 27 June 1964, and 3 July 1964.

151. *People's World*, 6 June 1964.

152. *Evening Outlook*, 6 June 1964.

153. Dr. John Lechner to Kenneth Hahn, 21 May 1964, Box 595, Kenneth Hahn Papers.

and running against you, or any white man."¹⁵⁴ In turn it was Supervisor Hahn who during the midst of the "Black Power" controversy pushed a unanimous motion in this elected body to halt a rally under this banner at Will Rogers Park on the premise that it would be dangerous.¹⁵⁵

Little thought was devoted to the broader context of destabilizing left-wing interracial militancy that then created an opening for the ascendancy of a kind of Black Nationalism. What next? Bashing the soon-to-arrive BPP?

Significantly, a close reader of the wildly anticommunist *Tocsin*, which had organic connections to U.S. intelligence, could have anticipated the coming of the BPP by 1966. For it was in July 1965—even before the Watts Revolt, thought to be ignited by a supposedly embryonic BPP—that this weekly headlined the Deacons for Defense, the Louisiana-based armed anti-Jim Crow activists, referred to by these observers as an "armed 'civil rights group.'" They were, allegedly, given \$15,000 by "Communist lawyer Jack Tenner [*sic*] of Los Angeles...born in Russia."¹⁵⁶ *Tocsin* was not sufficiently oracular to anticipate that the Deacons would inspire the formation of the BPP within months. On the other hand, Congressman John Conyers of Detroit, elected in 1964, was cited in its pages also in July 1965 for the proposition, in his own homage to the Deacons, that "Freedom Patrols" should be formed. *Tocsin*'s monitors also found that he was "recently linked romantically with San Francisco attorney Beverly Axelrod, one of the women who met Red Vietnamese women in Jakarta last July."¹⁵⁷ (This was weeks before the bloodily murderous anticommunist coup that rocked Indonesia and transformed the politics of the region—if not the planet.)¹⁵⁸

Looking back, by 1966 factors had lined up for the ascension of the BPP, making its arrival virtually inevitable.

154. Martin Pollard to "Dear Kenny," ca. 1964, Box 595, Kenneth Hahn Papers.

155. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 24 November 1966.

156. *Tocsin*, 29 July 1965.

157. *Tocsin*, 30 July 1965.

158. Vincent Bevins, *The Jakarta Method: Washington's Anticommunist Crusade and the Mass Murder Program that Shaped Our World*, New York: Public Affairs, 2020.

Chapter 8

Panthers Roar, 1964-1966

August 1965 was a hinge moment in the Southland and, ultimately, nationally. The Watts Revolt was of profound significance, and not simply because the zone of conflict was larger than the city of San Francisco or because of reports of armed Blacks—firing at planes seeking to land at the major city airport—or the 34 slain at the hands of the authorities. It was epochal because of the ideological import, leading directly to the formation of the Community Alert Patrol, a precursor of the BPP, and the formation of a Black Nationalist grouping by the man then known as Ron Karenga. These two new formations grabbed the imagination of Black youth, as the NAACP came to be regarded as a hopelessly middle-class organization, while the CP continued to be sandbagged by prevailing anticommunism, fueled further by the war on Vietnam. However, this era also witnessed the ascendancy of the then UCLA professor, Angela Davis, a kind of bridge between the BPP and CP (as shall be seen), just as the BPP itself was a bridge between Black Nationalism and the struggle for socialism. The NAACP did not grasp that if it had spent less time seeking to purge supposedly pro-CP attorneys like Herbert Simmons and Leo Branton, they could have spent more time battling police misconduct, which was ultimately the trigger for the unrest of August 1965.¹

The Watts Revolt also marked the moment when the ideological baton in Black America was passed westward, as Karenga's "Black Cultural Nationalism," with its emphasis on dress—daishikis—hairdos au naturel, Kwanzaa and the like was of lasting significance. (Kwanzaa is an observance of principles, e.g., self-determination, marked in late December through the new year.) The "Revolutionary Black Nationalism" of the BPP was ephemeral by way of comparison but still of profound import. Similarly, the Black Studies movement gained prominence at San Francisco State University in 1968 and bequeathed to our movement the pillar known as actor and artist Danny Glover, while the campus revolt in Berkeley in 1964 likewise was of national, if not global, consequence. This took place as U.S. imperialism's ongoing conflict with China

1. Horne, *Fire this Time*, passim. Other estimates suggest that the number slain in August 1965 exceeded the 34 counted officially.

and Indochina was most directly evident in the westward facing Golden State, San Diego—the military bastion—notably.

Unfortunately, these diverse manifestations were often homogenized effortlessly in the convenient rubric of “Black Power,” though it is well known that there were sharp differences between Karenga’s forces and those of the BPP. Even scholars with the luxury of hindsight have had difficulty in grasping how this current was shaped unavoidably by global winds, especially the difficulty in which African and Caribbean decolonization placed U.S. imperialism, compelling domestic “liberalization” of a sort. And thus, post-1991, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, there was much less need for imperialism to compromise, hence an excruciating retrenchment. CP comrades had the advantage of being able to consult with advanced forces globally, be they in Cuba or Southern Africa, but were handicapped by their overestimation of the fruits of 1776, that is, the normalization of settler colonialism, as opposed to its interrogation, which led correspondingly to an underestimation of the poison of class collaboration especially among the Euro-American middle class and working class.

Emblematically, in this flux and turmoil, the NAACP—the major mass organization—was not necessarily flourishing. It was in January 1966, months after the fires of August, that Roy Wilkins claimed that his organization “lost 11,000 members last year.”² His correspondent, Henry Smith of Colton, San Bernardino County, California, agreed that the group was “losing members” but he thought he knew why: the “organization...has refused to take a stand against our glorious leaders’ war in Vietnam.”³ For his part, Wilkins sailed into the teeth of reality when he denied there had been racist discrimination lancing Negro troops in Vietnam.⁴ Worse, the press reported accurately that Wilkins launched a “bitter attack” against Dr. King for his pro-peace stance. “When an American Negro soldier kills a Viet Cong, he is not killing a colored brother. Why should we consider the Viet Cong our colored brothers,” he asked querulously, since purportedly “they don’t feel the Negro is his brother.”⁵

There were those in South L.A. who wondered if the NAACP leadership was their “brother.” Norman Houston, who claimed to lead 487 in his branch, also admitted that this group had “bad habits” placing them “under extreme financial pressure growing out of activity associated with the Watts Riot” and the backlash against it.⁶ Less than a year after this conflagration Houston continued to carp

2. Roy Wilkins to Henry Smith of Colton, California, 25 January 1966, Part IV, Box A88, NAACP Papers-LC.

3. Henry Smith to Roy Wilkins, 15 January 1966, Part IV, Box A88, NAACP Papers-LC.

4. Roy Wilkins to Sergeant Robert Hollis of U.S. Army, 1 July 1966, Part IV, Box A88, NAACP Papers-LC.

5. Clipping, ca. 19 April 1967, Part IV, Box A88, NAACP Papers-LC.

6. Norman Houston to Lucille Black, 18 February 1966, Part IV, Box C3, NAACP Papers-LC. Cf. W.E.B. Du Bois Club of L.A., “The Fire this Time,” November 1965, Box 69B, Dorothy Healey Papers, CSU-Long Beach.

about the "state of unrest within our community" which "continues to rise. Almost every night this week there has been some type of violent outburst," making him question the need for a "mass demonstration" against U.S. Steel.⁷

* * *

The post-1965 ground beneath the feet of activists and reactionaries alike began to shift. The new dispensation left few unaffected. Thus, in April 1965, Mayor Sam Yorty, who became a despised figure in Black L.A., thanked then prominent Negro politician, the Trinidad-born Mervyn Dymally, for "your strong support of me in the re-election campaign," which was "deeply appreciated." After 1965, the man who became Congressman Dymally was a staunch backer of the BPP, and support for a scoundrel like Yorty would be unimaginable.⁸ This trend was foreshadowed in late 1966 when Dymally broke with the potentate of the state Assembly, Jess Unruh, and endorsed the trajectory of "Black Power."⁹

In fact, by the end of the year Eldridge Cleaver was preparing to "formally submit the proposal for the Mervyn Dymally Negro History Study Club" since the policymaker "has gone to great lengths to round up a bit of support from the kindred Negro History Clubs,"¹⁰ a nucleus for the emergent BPP.

As for the BPP, their future mover and shaker Leroy Eldridge Cleaver was behind bars in August. However, the impact of this tumult on him was redolent of what befell Black L.A. as a whole. He was celebrating. "My family used to live on 111th and Compton Avenue," near the epicenter of rebellion, "in the heart of Watts.... I'm from Watts and I'm proud of it."¹¹ That is, as an oppressed people, Negroes—make that Blacks—were made to think that they were helpless. Even the non-violent protests (often featuring them receiving severe beatdowns by opponents) did not have as electric an impact as Watts 1965, featuring Negroes fighting back, necessitating the calling out of more forces than it took to subdue Santo Domingo a few months earlier. This celebratory attitude was to have knock-on effects in coming years, fueling the rise of the BPP of which Cleaver became a premier principal. At its zenith in the late 1960s, according to one analyst, there were "over sixty chapters" of this group—astonishing, retrospectively, given their unalloyed radicalism.¹²

7. Norman Houston to Leonard Carter, 2 June 1966, Carton 83, NAACP Papers-UCB.

8. Mayor Yorty to Mervyn Dymally, 19 April 1965, Box 44, Mervyn Dymally Papers.

9. *People's World*, 26 November 1966.

10. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 6 December 1965, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

11. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 16 August 1965, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

12. Gifford, *Revolution or Death*, 5.

Another Angeleno, the imprisoned George Jackson of Pasadena,¹³ who was to become quite close to Angela Davis, just before August 1965 requested that his father send him books by Mao Zedong and Du Bois,¹⁴ a fair reflection of the ideological influences that were to shape the BPP, which this prisoner was to serve as "Field Marshal," the emerging movement somehow encapsulated under the rubric of "Black Power." As for Jackson, he confessed in August 1965 that he tended to "pass into a state of anger over something that happened as far away as Rhodesia or the Union [*sic*] of South Africa,"¹⁵ a reflection of the internationalism then proliferating, which drew him to the multi-lingual Davis minimally and *a fortiori* indicated his grave concern for events in South L.A.

Often neglected subsequently, internationalism—a hallmark of the Black struggle historically¹⁶—had gone into eclipse in the aftermath of the NAACP purge of Du Bois in 1948. But the rise of a New (Black) Left propelled by the BPP brought this tendency to the forefront with a vengeance. By May 1965 the Chancellor of the University of California-San Diego lamented to his supervisor—the soon-to-be sacked Clark Kerr—that his campus was "under attack" because of growing protests about the U.S. intervention in Santo Domingo.¹⁷ Protesters in La Jolla were in a bind, for simultaneously developing was a so-called "Secret Army Organization," ultra-rightists with a major arsenal and mayhem in mind.¹⁸ Sadly, the widespread lack of historical understanding in a region where the dispossession of the Indigenous often was taken for granted across ideological lines, also led to a diminished understanding of radical and progressive history too, which could have imbued these movements with added sustainability, for example, the once widespread influence of the once mighty Industrial Workers of the World—or "Wobblies"—in San Diego and the salient "Free Speech Fight" of 1914,¹⁹ of direct relevance in the 1960s.

The ultra-right not only had an armed wing militarily, it had an armed wing theologically *cum* politically. In other words, taking advantage of the intense religiosity that accompanied settler colonialism in the first instance,²⁰ there was a decided attempt to leverage theology for political gain. This was notably the case in the Southland, where megachurches pockmarked the landscape. In Glendale, for example, by January 1966 there was a self-professed "Underground

13. Cleaver grew up in South Pasadena, a city often neglected in tracing the genealogy of Black Radicalism in L.A. See Gene Marine, *The Black Panther*, New York: Signet, 1969, 49.

14. George Jackson to His Father, June 1965, in Jackson, *Soledad Brother*, 61.

15. Remarks by Jackson, August 1965, in Jackson, *Soledad Brother*, 71.

16. Horne, *Negro Comrades*, and *Facing the Rising Sun*, *passim*.

17. Chancellor William McGill to James Galbraith, 10 May 1965, Box 249, Chancellor Subject Files, UCSD (abbrev. Chancellor Subject Files).

18. Louis Tackwood, et al., *The Glasshouse Tapes*, New York: Avon, 1973, 161.

19. "The History of the San Diego Free Speech Fight," 1914, Box 5B, Dorothy Healey Papers, CSU-Long Beach.

20. Horne, *Dawning of the Apocalypse*, *passim*.

Evangelism" bent on "lifting up Christ in Communist lands." They claimed to have "missionaries at work in 7 Communist lands" and even detected the "holy spirit at work in the Russian Army," along with an "intensive crusade" that was "reaching children."²¹ At the same time "now at work in Communist Cuba," a hated ideation of their worst fears, were "thousands of Gospels" deposited in "Castro's Communist 'Fortress.'"²² The LAPD collaborated, offering speakers on "Youth vs. Communism" or "Behind the Sugar Cane Curtain" in Cuba. Signaling the importance of this line, the old reliable—"We Were Communists for the FBI"—came in second best, despite the star power of Cleon Skousen and Birchler and future Congressman John Schmitz.²³ "Christian Missions to the Communist World" and "Jesus to the Communist World" was an expression of their regime change policy.²⁴

Los Angeles Community College had developed the intellectual and political candlepower that could convert a mass and inchoate insurrection into a long-term proposition. For then the Independent Student Union there included Karenga, Ed Bullins (playwright and, in some ways, the Voice of the Black 1960s), and budding Communists Franklin Alexander and Carl Bloice, both of whom were instrumental in the Angela Davis case.²⁵

As matters evolved, one of the most critical factors in generating activism in the Golden State was the massive expansion of higher education during the administration of former Lawyers Guild member, Gov. "Pat" Brown, defeated by Reagan in 1966. Thus, it was in 1966 that SNCC had a regional office in San Francisco—449 14th Street—where the document "In Defense of Black Power" was drafted by Charles Capper, former chairman of Students for a Democratic Society at Johns Hopkins, then a graduate student at Berkeley, and Sy Landy, chair of the Independent Socialist Club and formerly with the Pacifica Radio outlet in New York City, WBAI-FM. This network, which included an L.A. affiliate, KPFK-FM, also was crucial to the rise of both the "New Left" [e.g., SDS], and the BPP and "Black Power."²⁶

Stoking this expansion of higher education was the population explosion leading up to 1965, which contributed substantially to an augmentation of the potential audience for progressive radio. Notably, the growth in the numbers of African-Americans and those of Mexican origin simultaneously diluted

21. "Underground Evangelism," 7 (No. 1, January 1966), CSU-Fullerton.

22. "Underground Evangelism," March 1966, CSU-Fullerton.

23. R.F. Rock, Commander of Public Information Division-LAPD to Julian Foster, CSUF, 6 January 1965, FC SF F3 3 57, CSU-Fullerton.

24. "Christian Missions to the Communist World" and "Jesus to the Communist World," 22 October 1969, FC 06 0186 09, CSU-Fullerton.

25. Mike Davis and Jon Wiener, *Set the Night on Fire: L.A. in the Sixties*, New York: Verso, 2021, 25.

26. Document, 30 October 1966, Box 1, Fred Hirsch Collection, SJSU (abbrev. Fred Hirsch Collection).

politically—and otherwise—the strength of the ultra-right, which was concentrated heavily across class lines among Euro-Americans.²⁷

A harbinger of both the BPP and “Black Power” was the organizing of the Community Alert Patrol in L.A. in the aftermath of the sounding of the guns of August. By June 1966 it was reported that it had “completed its first week of cruising the streets” and “observing police activity” with “five to 15 cars,” a real armada. Trolling the LAPD, which supposedly was designed to “protect and serve,” their motto was “to protect and observe,” which was affixed to the car doors along with a white handkerchief flown from the cars’ antennae. Consistent with Hollywood, they carried multiple cameras, still and motion picture too, along with a tape recorder. Their most prominent vehicle was a black 1938 Plymouth, which belonged to Ron Wilkins, sketched as a “tall, thin college student who has acquired the nickname of ‘Crook’...he wears dark suits with suspenders and a wide Fedora with a devilishly turned brim, which he perches atop his head to a sinister angle.” Again, consistent with the local industry, he “looks every bit like George Raft,” celluloid tough guy. L.A. was said to be emulating Seattle where this “system...went into operation a year ago...and is still in effect,” while “San Francisco and Detroit have also policed its police.” In Seattle it was “called the Freedom Patrol” and “conducted on foot,” virtually disallowed in the wide-open spaces of the Southland. Yet, this Pacific Northwest metropolis delivered in that the “city now has a much lower incidence of police brutality charges.”²⁸

CAP caught the fancy of the *Los Angeles Free Press*, which pointed to “Louis Gothard” as “chairman of the 15 member Board of Directors” that was “founded in June 1966” and since had been spreading nationally to Gilroy (due north), Washington, San Diego, Cleveland—and Oakland, the most important export destination. Predictively, they were “harassed horribly by the cops” said Gothard—though, he added happily, “there’s a new one in Sacramento,” speaking of yet another CAP chapter.²⁹ Communists claimed that the CAP was conceived at the Hugh Gordon Bookstore, the eponymous site begun by this namesake who was born in Georgia, started the store in 1948, and remained close to the CP.³⁰

Designed to monitor the often-bloodthirsty police, they had a license from the Federal Communications Commission, the regulatory body in Washington, allowing for five radio-controlled units at one juncture, along with ubiquitous cameras and tape recorders. A branch spread northward to San Jose: the “police

27. Department of Industrial Relations, State of California, “Negroes and Mexicans in South and East Los Angeles...Changes Between 1960 and 1965 in Population, Employment, Income and Family Status...” July 1966, Box 67A, Dorothy Healey Papers, CSU-Long Beach.

28. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 16 June 1966.

29. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 7-13 July 1967.

30. *People’s World*, 14 August 1971.

presence of the eastside" of this booming metropolis in today's Silicon Valley was said to be "frightening."³¹

However, within a year of the August Revolt, the CAP was reportedly splitting, leading to the "Sons of Watts," said to contain 90 young men between the ages of 16 and 30, and which then launched a fusillade of vitriol at CAP: They were accused of being "non-Watts residents" and "instead of policing the police," it was "said the Sons will be assisting the police."³² Soon this ersatz grouping was reported as picketing a radical bookstore at 9122 South Compton Avenue—50 protesters all told—with symbolic black paint being smeared on the storefront.³³

Yet Karenga was likely the premier figure who emerged from the ashes of Watts, perhaps explicating why the BPP was to conclude subsequently that "race riots cannot solve class problems," especially considering the emerging balding linguist who was "as tricky as Black Confederate soldiers." Chronicled by Elaine Brown of the BPP who knew him, "he looked like a vanilla fudge Buddha" with "tiny hands." He conversed in French with Angela Davis, who carried a "smile with too many teeth" that were tobacco stained.³⁴ Born Ronald Everett in 1941, by 1964 he was teaching Kiswahili in an adult education class in the city. Actually, I knew his mentor at UCLA Council, "Count" Taylor, whose path I crossed in the 1970s at the State University of New York at Old Westbury, where our mutual friend Angela Gilliam was teaching. Professor Taylor has been described as a "Negritude enthusiast," a reference to the philosophy developed by Senegal's founding father—and French puppet—Léopold Senghor.

Yet even the various iterations of "Black Cultural Nationalism" symbolized by Karenga were susceptible to the ambience of the era. US chief James Doss-Tayari was an ex-sergeant in the U.S. military and a veteran of the war in Korea, deemed to be the first real "soldier" of the group. There was a paramilitary wing, Simba Wachanga, and in its infancy US, like the BPP, was favorable toward Mao Zedong and Ho Chi Minh. US taught cadre how to disassemble an M-1 carbine blindfolded, mimicking the BPP, and indulged in combat and weapons training. Ngoma Ali of US took a surname based on a character in the 1966 cinematic blockbuster *The Battle of Algiers*, which also shaped the BPP. As Karenga said, "We always say, 'yeah, we're against violence,' but after sundown anything might happen." Their underground activities reputedly included bank robberies, armory raids, accumulating explosive materials and devices, envisioning 1971 as the year of massive Black uprisings. US cadre served prison terms for armed robberies of banks, stores, and hotels; a 1970 police raid uncovered from them stockpiles of ammunitions, weapons, and pipe bombs. Martial arts were also part of their

31. See undated broadside, Box 1, Fred Hirsch Collection. See also Ron Wilkins, Oral History, unclear date, CSU-Northridge.

32. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 25 August 1966.

33. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 27 October 1966.

34. Elaine Brown, *A Taste of Power*, 108.

curriculum.³⁵ By November 1966 it was not extraordinary to find a front-page editorial by Karenga in a newsletter, sited at 1302 West Santa Barbara in L.A., that included a nearby feature on the BPP of Alabama. The periodical, *Harambee*—"all unite" in Karenga's Kiswahili—vowed to "crusade, inform and involve."³⁶

By 1966, Karenga and his comrades attracted a crowd of 300 to a commemoration of the first anniversary of Malcom X's tragic assassination. Speakers were limned as "full of fire," consistent with the temper of the times, while Karenga, it was reported, "kept the audience filled with laughter" given his "sardonic wit," displaying his sparkling talent with words,³⁷ his trademark. Soon thereafter he and his comrades were said to have joined with elements adjacent to the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in forging the idea of "Freedom City," extending from Vernon to El Segundo and the Harbor Freeway to Alameda, a kind of Negro Valhalla, a concrete realization of Black Power. This proposal was defeated.³⁸

Karenga aside, SNCC (pronounced "snick") was the flame that lit the torch of protest borne by Black youth. Relentlessly, the authorities sought to establish that they were little more than a "Communist Front," an attempt ratified when Harry Steinmetz, purged from San Diego State University, wound up in Atlanta, where he was identified as one of SNCC's most "ardent supporter[s]."³⁹ When Steinmetz sought legal counsel in this regard, coming under suspicion was the future BPP attorney William Kunstler, as well as Howard Moore,⁴⁰ future counsel to Angela Davis. Repeatedly, the U.S. authorities sought to impose an anticommunist orientation on SNCC, in light of their success in intimidating the NAACP similarly. They were only somewhat successful, partially because of SNCC's ethic of self-determination and a decided dearth of idealism about the intentions and maneuverings of Washington and Sacramento. Yet the FBI pressed on, emphasizing "Communist Infiltration" of SNCC, especially through 1965.⁴¹

SNCC's upward trajectory was in part a reflection of the (compelled) ideological weaknesses of the NAACP, obligated to embark on a forced march toward moderation, creating a massive opening then filled by SNCC, the BPP—

35. Scot Brown, *Fighting for US: Maulana Karenga, the US Organization and Black Cultural Nationalism*, New York: New York University Press, 2003, 8, 10, 13, 40, 42, 54, 55, 59, 90, 91, 123. See also Janet Vaillant, *Black, French and African: A Life of Léopold Sédar Senghor*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990.

36. *Harambee*, 3 November 1966, Box 17, Northern Student Movement Records, Schomburg Center-NYPL.

37. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 3 March 1966.

38. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 28 July 1966.

39. Report on Steinmetz, 2 February 1964, Box 2, Harry Steinmetz Papers, SDSU (abbrev. Harry Steinmetz Papers).

40. William Kunstler to Harry Steinmetz, 14 February 1964, Box 2, Harry Steinmetz Papers.

41. Report on "Communist Infiltration," 16 March 1965, covering 19 October 1964 to 5 March 1965, Reel 2, FBI File: SNCC, Duke University-Durham, N.C. (abbrev. FBI File: SNCC-Duke).

and inchoate street protests in Watts. And despite their formal title, SNCC was well prepared to join the self-professed vanguard of the BPP, which arrived on center stage arms in hand. James Forman, one of their kingpins—related by marriage to the Oakland Communist Jessica Mitford—and one of the movement's primary intellectuals, who for a while took a high-level post with the BPP, knew that keeping and carrying arms was consistent with community norms in the battleground that was the Deep South. According to Julian Bond, yet another SNCC commander, "almost everybody with whom we stayed in Mississippi had guns, as a matter of course, hunting guns. But, you know, they were there for other purposes too." Exemplary of this trend was Louisiana's "Deacons for Defense," which reportedly bought ammunition in bulk and also met with Bobby Seale in the prelude to his founding the BPP as they discussed starting a Deacons chapter in the Golden State. Indeed, just before the founding of the BPP, Black dignitaries—including Stokely Carmichael of SNCC, Floyd McKissick of CORE, Dr. King, Whitney Young of the Urban League, and Roy Wilkins—were on national television discussing the concept of Negroes arming. After the BPP was founded, donations to the NAACP quadrupled, as if the former's existence was sufficiently threatening to compel further a search for moderation.⁴² There was something in the air.

The man known as Abdul Aziz once worked alongside Carmichael during their student days at Howard University and they were roommates for a while. By 1966 Aziz and a comrade were arrested with an 18" pipe bomb, a loaded .22 caliber rifle, an M-1 carbine rifle, along with bandoliers full of shells, slingshots, crossbows, knives and clubs. By 1977 he was a director of the Hanafi Muslims, then in conflict with the Nation of Islam, which had an adjunct, described as a "rifle and pistol club" sparked by "gun hobbyists." This was a partial response to the 1973 deadliest mass murder in the history of modern Washington, D.C., inflicted by the Nation on the Hanafis, which then led to the largest hostage-taking in U.S. history instigated by the Hanafis. The latter's star recruit was the once and future Angeleno, basketball star Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, who saw the Hanafis as "more balanced" than the Panthers—though he too felt compelled to purchase a 12-gauge shotgun. The headman of the Hanafis, once known as Ernest X, had been part of the Nation of Islam and asserted that their Fruit of Islam too were well armed. They all were internationalists of a sort. In fact, in destabilizing the internationalist Communists and Panthers, the U.S. ruling class prepared the ground for the ideological hegemony of internationalist Muslims of various stripes, often with ties to what scholar Shahan Mufti has sketched as "Pakistani Muslims," "more fiercely militant than the Black Muslims." A Hanafi headman had toiled at the Pakistani legation in Washington. In 1972 reputedly the

42. Johnson, *Negroes and the Gun*, 247, 276, 283, 288, 291. See also Charles E. Cobb, Jr., *This Non-Violent Stuff Will Get You Killed: How Guns Made the Civil Rights Movement Possible*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2015.

government of Libya supplied \$3 million to the Nation. That same year, Nation chief Raymond Sharieff was shot and wounded, and that fall there had been 18 murders, 19 shootings and three abductions of various Muslims. In the aftermath of the Suez crisis, wherein Britain, France and Israel had waged war on Egypt, the latter's chief executive, G.A. Nasser, had reached out to the Nation, a signal factor in the primacy of the group shaped by Malcolm X. When the latter's mentor, Elijah Muhammad, expired in 1975, Compton in Los Angeles County was among the U.S. cities that celebrated him. By then the BPP, once a presence, had been pilloried and undermined.⁴³

Yet even the Black Communist Cyril Briggs, who often lost internal party battles about positioning vis-à-vis Black Nationalism, was disturbed by certain elements of this surfacing trend. A major component was Pat Alexander, a competitor of Almena Lomax, in terms of attracting Black readers in the Southland. Her *Herald-Dispatch* touted this trend, but Briggs was displeased. Just before passing into eternity in 1966 he rebuked her: The "clear evidence that your anti-Semitism colors your thinking is shown in your perennial confusion of Jews with Communists"—even though he knew that her anti-Zionism led to an effort to "destroy your newspaper."⁴⁴ But even the wise Briggs did not seem to grasp the wider forces at play, i.e., the demonizing of those like himself in the context of a class collaborationist settler regime led many Blacks toward various iterations of Islam, some of which bore the earmarks of anti-Jewish fervor. These iterations were—as shown in Washington, D.C.—marked by regressive tendencies emanating from Pakistan, which in turn was shaped by Saudi Arabia, complicating what could have been a progressive orientation. This regressive religious tendency was facilitated by a form of Christianity—rarely analyzed by the comrades—of a similar orientation, concretized in what is called today "White Christian Nationalism," which began to bloom as so many were transfixed by the contrasting philosophy of Dr. King. For his part, premier CP theoretician Herbert Aptheker—Jewish himself—veered the analysis in a different direction.⁴⁵

Alexander responded insultingly, terming her interlocutor a "swine."⁴⁶ Briggs was unintimidated, informing CP Chairman Henry Winston that "the lady...should have been taken on long ago" given her "obvious bid for Birchite advertising."⁴⁷ But Briggs was fighting a disadvantageous two-front war as he was heading to the grave. For at the same time, he was instructing "Dear Winnie" that there should be a "public repudiation" of the anti-Black Nationalist stance of their

43. Mufti, *American Caliph*, 6, 7, 60, 62, 75, 88, 102, 104, 126.

44. Cyril Briggs to Pat Alexander, 28 February 1966, Box 112, CPUSA Records-NYU.

45. Herbert Aptheker, *The Urgency of Marxist-Christian Dialogue: A Pragmatic Argument for Reconciliation*, New York: Harper Colophon, 1970.

46. Pat Alexander to Cyril Briggs, 1 May 1966, Box 112, CPUSA Records-NYU.

47. Cyril Briggs to Henry Winston, 28 February 1966, Box 112, CPUSA Records-NYU.

comrade, James Jackson.⁴⁸ Two-front wars rarely end well, and so it was for this one: The positions of Alexander and Jackson prevailed over that of Briggs in the long term. (However, readers should know that at one point in the 1970s, the pudgy, rapidly balding, light mocha-colored Jackson referred to this writer as a "shit bum" in a fractious dispute over personnel of the group then known as NAIMSAL [National Anti-Imperialist Movement in Solidarity with African Liberation].⁴⁹

Still, this efflorescence of Black Nationalism did not just confound certain Communists. Elbert Hudson, son of Dr. Hudson, by 1966 was serving on the Police Commission with technical oversight of the LAPD, a concession to Black revolt, but—said a local journalist—he "had made the bad mistake of equating the various Black Nationalist groups locally with the Mafia. On what grounds, nobody could tell."⁵⁰

He was not singular. Roy Wilkins also chose to fight a two-front war, battling Communists for years then by 1966 denouncing "Black Power" as "reverse Hitler" (soon a three-front war when he attacked Dr. King because of his antiwar activism). There were 2000 NAACP delegates amassing when bizarrely a "blond American Nazi...leaped on the platform after Wilkins had spoken and shouted invective at the audience," as if Black Power advocates had arranged a living rationale for why they had arisen. Yet Wilkins was also said to have been "interrupted by applause," and future congressman John Lewis resigned from SNCC in protest of Black Power.⁵¹

Strikingly, just days before the guns of August roared—in a counterpoint to the above revelations—the CP press hailed the arrival of "Deacons for Defense" in San Francisco.⁵² Wilfred Ussery, chair of the Bogalusa [Louisiana] Committee for Concern, which coordinated alongside the Deacons, told San Franciscans that the "four day visit of our two guests from Bogalusa was an unforgettable experience," though, typically, there was "almost total blackout" by "newspapers," ultimately self-sabotage in that it deprived readers of oncoming trends.⁵³ This was ironic in that Crown Zellerbach was a pulp and paper company authoritative in Bogalusa and San Francisco alike. The Committee for Concern included future BPP supporters including the mayor-in-waiting Willie Brown, Carlton Goodlett of the evanescent left-wing of the NAACP, the Rev. Cecil Williams, and Marvin Stender, a left-leaning attorney.⁵⁴ The would-be paramour of Cleaver, Beverly Axelrod, was involved and had sought to involve John Doar,

48. Cyril Briggs to "Dear Winnie," 30 June 1966, Box 112, CPUSA Records-NYU.

49. See, e.g., Gerald Horne, *White Supremacy Confronted*, passim.

50. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 16 June 1966.

51. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 7 July 1966.

52. *People's World*, 24 July 1965.

53. Wilfred Ussery to Committee Members, 5 April 1965, Box 8, Beverly Axelrod Papers.

54. List of Committee of Concern, 12 February 1965, Box 8, Beverly Axelrod Papers.

Assistant U.S. Attorney General, on their behalf.⁵⁵ The Deacons' sway extended southward where Louise Meriwether, then a rarity—a Black woman story analyst at a movie studio—and formerly of CORE, also spent time with them in Bogalusa, this before becoming a popular novelist.⁵⁶ Again, there was something in the air.

That something in the air often were bullets and other projectiles launched by ebony-complected trigger fingers. Ron Wilkins, one of the key post-1965 activists, recalled that James Forman, a top-tier SNCC principal, "often called for revolutionary armed struggle and acts of retribution inside the United States": "since violent means were used to enslave our ancestors and employed in the colonization of Africa," then ineluctably violent means would be required for our liberation. Consequently, "inside the United States," the oppressed "had every right to use violence, both defensively and offensively." As should be evident, "Jim vigorously promoted the ideas of Frantz Fanon,"⁵⁷ whose ideas gained hegemony precisely because they were congruent with what was already occurring. Thus, to pursue this exceedingly difficult strategic imperative of armed struggle, L.A. Panther commander Frank Diggs became a leader of their underground after serving a dozen years in Sing Sing, the notorious New York prison.⁵⁸ (To understand why the question of armed resistance arose precisely as it seemed that Jim Crow was in retreat, refer to the Introduction, especially consider the reference to decolonization of Zanzibar, a former depot for African slavery, where in 1964 a similar trend emerged.)⁵⁹

Perhaps not since 1865 had there been such an organized armed resistance by young Blacks. Unavoidably, this led to something new in U.S. politics: a movement for gun control. In fact, says scholar Adam Winkler of UCLA, "if it hadn't been for the Black Panthers...there might never have been a modern gun rights movement" which "inspired some of the strictest gun control laws"—ever. California at the behest of Gov. Ronald Reagan, and the federal authorities too, enthusiastically endorsed restrictions on arms (or, to the extent possible, restrictions on Negroes controlling arms). Arms in turn, Winkler says, "were central" to the BPP's "philosophy." Their "arsenal included machine guns, rifles, handguns, explosives, grenade launchers and boxes and boxes of ammunition." In the Southland, they "had connections with people at Camp Pendleton," a major Marine base populated heavily by young Negro men about to be dispatched to an uncertain fate in Vietnam. According to Winkler, these U.S. guardians "would sell [the BPP] anything for the right price. One Panther said that they could have

55. John Doar to Beverly Axelrod, 8 July 1965, Box 6, Beverly Axelrod Papers.

56. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 3 February 1966.

57. Ron Wilkins on James Forman, 27 January 2005, Box 1, Ron Wilkins Papers. See, e.g., Adam Shatz, *The Rebel's Clinic: The Revolutionary Lives of Frantz Fanon*, New York: FSG, 2024.

58. Elaine Brown, *A Taste of Power*, 139.

59. Cf. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 26 August 1967: Black Communist William Patterson said that this militancy was "Black people reacting to 100 years of 'terror.'"

bought an M-48 tank and driven it right up the freeway" to Los Angeles. Thus, "every member of the Black Panthers was expected to know how to use a firearm"—"how to clean, handle and shoot." Congruent with the then zeitgeist, even the philosophically non-violent Dr. King "applied for a permit to carry a concealed firearm," as "armed supporters took turns guarding King's home." This home, said adviser Glenn Smiley, contained "an arsenal,"⁶⁰ understandable given the maniacal ultra-right threat.

Inextricably woven together were the escalation of war in Vietnam, mandating the dragooning of the flower of Black youth to fight, and the concomitant militancy that flowed into the ranks of the BPP. Thus, there arose a "Movement for a Democratic Military" by Marines and sailors from Camp Pendleton from what was referred to as the "San Diego Naval Complex." MDM boasted that it "attacked the military more and more at its weakest point: its cannon fodder, its common soldier" and "has since spread to military bases all over California." What could have been added was that the state, facing the Pacific, was essential to wars in Korea and Indochina, and to the intermittent confrontation with China and thereby, dialectically, was bound to generate resistance in kind. "In its first month," said this undated manifesto, "1000 Marines and 4000 civilians marched behind MDM banners to support" the Panthers. A provocative slogan blared, "Put the pig in the brig," an aspect of the larger story: "Black Marines who, along with a lesser number of whites and Chicanos, make up the majority of the leadership" which confronted ideologically what detractors saw as the "evils of 'MDM Communism.'" Inexorably, these courageous servicemen were subjected to assaults by "Night Riders" who "directed a long burst of automatic weapons fire from a passing car" at their office.⁶¹ Even more provocatively, MDM in a publication entitled "Attitude Check," demanded "collective bargaining," which would have upended wholly the very structure of the "salute and execute" military.⁶²

Inevitably, San Diego was honeycombed more than usual with spies as a result, one of whom, communicating from this border town, informed State Senator Hugh Burns that "we are really at war" in that "Indonesia has shown us the way!" a presumed laudatory reference to the bloodbath there in which the left was drowned in late 1965. Jerry Le Blanc of the *Santa Monica Evening Outlook*, yet another cooperative journalist, can "give you a complete list of subversive clubs and Red leaders. He infiltrated their meetings disguised as a disgruntled

60. Adam Winkler, *Gunfight: The Battle Over the Right to Bear Arms in America*, New York: Norton, 2011, 231, 234, 235, 244. See also Transcript, Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles, #A253348, Box 12, David Bernstein Papers-UCLA: Secured from Camp Pendleton for the Panthers were "Six m-60, 7.62 caliber machine guns...thirty M-14 rifles, 7.62 caliber, were stolen...prior to April the 14th, 1969."

61. "Duck Power," n.d., Box 5, Harry Edwards Papers, SJSU (abbrev. Harry Edwards Papers).

62. "Attitude Check," n.d., Box 5, Harry Edwards Papers.

newspaper employee who had been fired. He wrote 12 articles about them for our SD [San Diego] *Evening Tribune*.”⁶³

Again, beginning in 1965 and continuing until about 1970, there were scores of episodes involving guerrilla acts of sabotage and the like in the U.S., mostly in California. Reports of theft of dynamite also heightened the possibility of bombings.⁶⁴

To a degree, the BPP was inspired by Robert F. Williams, formerly of North Carolina then exiled in Cuba and China, who during his heyday dug foxholes, built barricades and wrote passionately about “Negroes with Guns.” The BPP also was inspired by a similarly named grouping in Alabama, not to mention what scholar Hasan Kwame Jeffries has referred to as the “Black Panther Party of Northern California founded by Ken Freeman and Ernie Allen and the Black Panther Political Party founded by John Floyd”—not to mention a similarly named grouping in New York City—all of which should be distinguished from the longer-lasting party founded by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale in Oakland,⁶⁵ the subject of these pages, though all of these reflect the ethos of the era, when militancy up to and including armed struggle gained velocity. Thus, on 20 August 1966, the announcement was made that “The Black Panther Party has arrived in Harlem,” with an office at 2407 Seventh Avenue, but this formation was inspired by Lowndes County, Alabama,⁶⁶ rather than Oakland—although they all were inspirited similarly.

To that end, the aforementioned John Floyd, according to BPP leader Elaine Brown, then of L.A., who knew him, sported “wire rimmed glasses and carried a briefcase everyday, which contained his pistol.”⁶⁷

Yet armed struggle was not the only deep imprint left by the now departed BPP. They were emulated worldwide, an extension of their own brand of internationalism, but particularly in Bermuda, India and Australia. The BPP’s “Executive Mandate No. 1,” issued in May 1967, called for Black folk to “arm themselves against the terror before it is too late” and, in response, the Black Beret Cadre of Bermuda raised the insistent cry of “Armed Struggle.” The BPP and their emulators were all influenced by the stunning success of the Cuban Revolution of

63. Letter from San Diego to Senator Hugh Burns, 9 May 1966, Report and Thank you Letters, Box 68, 93-04-12 D4178, P2, CUAC Records.

64. “Scanlan’s,” January 1971, in Reel 22, 16 November 1971, Black Panther Documents.

65. Hasan Kwame Jeffries, *Bloody Lowndes: Civil Rights and Black Power in Alabama’s Black Belt*, New York: New York University Press, 2009, 103, 285.

66. Document, 20 August 1966, Box 1, Records of Black Panther Party-Harlem Branch, Schomburg Center-NYPL (abbrev. BPP Harlem Records). See also Newton in *The Black Panther*, 29 November 1975: As a student while reading “four volumes of Mao” he encountered Ernie Allen, et al. “They claimed to function as an underground movement,” he said, speaking of the Revolutionary Action Movement, but “indulged in a lot of revolutionary talk, none of it underground.... [they] wrote a lot” and were “infiltrated with agents.... Bobby Seale tried to get me into the RAM chapter but the members refused to accept me...I think I threatened them.”

67. Elaine Brown, *A Taste of Power*, 107.

1959 under the guidance of Fidel Castro and, especially the Argentine-born Ernesto "Che" Guevara, whose presence on the island fortified the borderless nature of their success, further undergirding internationalism. That was not all. Also inducted into the 1960s pantheon were Frantz Fanon, the Martinican-born freedom fighter in Algeria (again, à la Che, fortifying internationalism even more); Lenin; Marx and Engels; Nkrumah; Mao Zedong; and Kim il-Sung. Rallies for the BPP in Tanzania were not uncommon, while the Panthers donated medical supplies to guerrillas fighting Portuguese colonialism in Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau and Angola. This trend was punctuated in Algeria a few years after the BPP's formation in June 1969 when they were feted at a global festival with, it was said, "five out of 11 members...of the Central Committee" present, including Eldridge Cleaver, who led the delegation and their legation, a strategic breakthrough in that it marked a rare moment when Black Americans established a formal global presence beyond the jurisdiction of Washington.⁶⁸

* * *

Watts 1965 was interpreted widely as a setback for U.S. imperialism, then broadcasting its alleged virtues globally in the ideological contestation with world socialism. Conveniently located in the zone of conflict at the University of Southern California was the California Research Institute for Communist Strategy and Propaganda, which had a falcon's-eye view of what was unfolding. Naturally, they saw the commotion of August 1965 through the clouded lens of the battle against socialism. Before then they had focused on so-called "Communist Fronts," which predisposed them toward a jaundiced analysis. They thought that Hollywood had donated a whopping \$2 million to the CP and played an instrumental role in their launching of its San Francisco-based newspaper.⁶⁹ Since they had regular time on television where their guests included the likes of William Sullivan of the FBI, their leader—Rodger Swearingen—was able to broadcast far and wide his concept of the "alarming success" of the CP.⁷⁰ A specialty of theirs was how the Soviet press covered Black America, meaning that the Watts Revolt sent them into an overdrive of conniptions. Highlighted were the condemnatory letter sent by CP leader Gus Hall to President Lyndon Johnson⁷¹

68. Michael L. Clemons and Charles E. Jones, "Global Solidarity: The Black Panther Party in the International Arena," *New Political Science*, 21 (No. 2, 1999): 177-203, 177, 182, 184, 188, 194, 195, 198, 199, 200.

69. Special Focus on "Communist Front" organizations, ca. 1964, Box 1, Records of California Research Institute for Communist Strategy and Propaganda, USC (abbrev. RCRICSP).

70. Transcript, 23 June 1963, Box 2, RCRICSP.

71. Gus Hall to President Johnson, 11 September 1965, Box 2, RCRICSP.

and the analysis by Dr. King of the conflagration.⁷² Thanks to this institute, we have an account of how *Pravda* was irate about the "brutal suppression by iron and blood of [the] Negro population," which "shocked the people of all continents."⁷³ In high dudgeon, the companion journal *Izvestia* waxed poetical, borrowing lingo from the Nation of Islam when they announced that "Negroes in the City of the Angels live in hell where white devils in police uniform are torturing them."⁷⁴ As the embers were still flickering, *Pravda* analogized battles in Vietnam with what was still occurring in the streets of Los Angeles. They were "two sides of one and the same coin," it was said. "[F]rom this time on, all countries...listening to statesmen from Washington holding forth on the charms of American 'democracy' will...always remember the shooting and killing in Los Angeles...the brand of imperialism is on the crimes in Vietnam, the brand of imperialism is on the reprisals in Los Angeles."⁷⁵

Ironically, these Moscow-based organs were similar in tone to the strident anticommunists at home in the U.S. Editorializing on mainstream radio and television in the Southland, M.B. Jackson declared that what was happening was a "Second Civil War."⁷⁶ However, Mary Belle Magnani of 350 Encino Drive in Oak View, captured the sentiment of many with an articulation of the default position: "Communist influence" was the culprit.⁷⁷ She was echoing official Sacramento, which likewise included that the transforming student revolt at the flagship UC campus in Berkeley in 1964 was somehow reducible to the role of Bettina Aptheker and her Communist comrades.⁷⁸

Although the 1960s—more pointedly, post-1965—have been regarded accurately as the onset of a concentrated era of unrest and protest, often lost sight of is the point that the right-wing was not exactly slumbering as this contrary trend unwound. The Negro police agent Louis Tackwood notes accurately that in response the LAPD beefed up its intelligence component, not to mention developing a counterinsurgency or SWAT [Special Weapons and Tactics] capability, which imposed enormous damage, to the brink of extinction, on movements in coming years.⁷⁹

* * *

72. Analysis of Dr. King, 1 September 1965, Box 2, RCRICSP.

73. *Pravda*, 19 August 1965, Box 2, RCRICSP.

74. *Izvestia*, 20 August 1965, Box 2, RCICSP.

75. *Pravda*, 20 August 1965, Box 2, RCICSP.

76. Editorial, ca. August 1965, Box 68, 93-04-12, D4178 P2, "Watts Riots," CUAC Records.

77. Mary Belle Magnani to Senator Hugh Burns, 4 October 1965, "Watts Riots," CUAC Records.

78. Thirteenth Report on Un-American Activities in California, Sacramento, 1964, SFSU.

79. Tackwood, *Glasshouse Tapes*, 30.

The CP journal, in the run-up to August 1965, was focused tightly on the unfolding anti-Jim Crow movement. "Solidarity with Selma: 2 weeks that shook L.A." was the clarion call in March, hailing a "24 hour a day vigil" at the federal building backed by CORE. There were dozens of Southlanders in Selma, including Norman Houston, the gold-plated leader of the local NAACP. Then 3000 students at L.A. City College—recall that this school provided a good deal of the radical energy then emerging—demanded a brawny federal intervention; the clergy did not shed its obligations, making Selma a Sunday pulpit topic.⁸⁰ Then the other sparkplug for unrest revealed itself when a few weeks later 1000 appeared at an antiwar rally at the federal building, sponsored by Students for a Democratic Society.⁸¹

Foreseeably, also revealed was the presence of a spy for the FBI: 22-year-old Sharon Crawford, described as "blond" and "plump" within the CP youth group, the Du Bois Clubs, in the bull's-eye.⁸² Correspondingly, the FBI thought it had reason to suspect that the SNCC affiliate in L.A. at 2501 South San Pedro, where James Garrett served as chair, had an overlapping directorate with the Du Bois Clubs in the person of Garrett himself.⁸³

The questionable chronicler of the BPP Earl Anthony thought that Beverly Axelrod of San Francisco, whose energetic ministrations were instrumental in springing Cleaver from prison, "brought the Communist influence" into the BPP.⁸⁴ But this was as misleading as the idea that opposition to anticommunism within SNCC was due to the presence in their ranks of Du Bois Club cadre. Anthony would have been on firmer ground if he had suggested that Axelrod played a pivotal role in shaping the BPP's vanguard stance on the Queer Question from her perch in similarly vanguard San Francisco. Expeditiously, in the spring of 1966, she rebuked the man she helped to form—Eldridge Cleaver—for his own homophobia, which became even more pronounced once he turned sharply toward conservative Christianity. His referring to a gay man "in the feminine gender was unkind," she said, noting correctly that it contained "something of a sneer in it." "Individual liberty goes beyond politics," she asserted prematurely. She also repudiated similarly unkind remarks he had made about the sex life of Dr. King's aide, Bayard Rustin.⁸⁵ Repeatedly, she reprimanded him, telling him a tad drolly that he was "hitting below the belt" in questioning the queerness of writer James Baldwin: This was "not logically justified," and in fact, "anachronistic."⁸⁶

80. *People's World*, 27 March 1965.

81. *People's World*, 24 April 1965.

82. *People's World*, 1 May 1965.

83. Report, 16 March 1965, Reel 2, FBI File: SNCC-Duke.

84. Newton, *Bitter Grain*, 1991, 226.

85. Beverly Axelrod to Eldridge Cleaver, 29 April 1966, in Melanie Margaret Kask, "Soul Mates: The Prison Letters of Eldridge Cleaver and Beverly Axelrod," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California-Berkeley, 2003, 1273.

86. Beverly Axelrod to Eldridge Cleaver, 12 June 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1460.

Remorseless, Cleaver responded by providing tribute to Calvin Hernton's own assailment of Baldwin.⁸⁷

* * *

What was occurring was that the overdosage of anticommunism, like the overdosage of antibiotics, was compromising efficacy. By mid-1966 60 UCLA professors protested to the U.S. Attorney General about persecution of the Du Bois Clubs,⁸⁸ an anticipation of the welcome received on campus which embraced Angela Davis a few years after she declared that, yes, she was a Communist.

But 1965 was not only the year of the Watts Revolt. It was also the moment when a shift in the global balance of forces was exposed, as African and Caribbean nations continued to surge to independence and Vietnam continued to inflict staggering blows against U.S. imperialism, not least because of aid from the Soviet Union, and this was reflected at UCLA and other campuses. In L.A. at large this shift was manifested in May when the Rev. Edward Jones, a Negro cleric, defeated the ultra-rightist by the name "Mrs. Marion Miller" for a school board seat; this was depicted by the CP organ as "the only citywide race on the final election ballot,"⁸⁹ magnifying its importance. Her defeat was accentuated by the fact that she had been an informant for the FBI.⁹⁰ However, the continued strength of the ultra-right was unveiled when the stunning allegation was made that "two out of three [LAPD cops happened to be] members of the John Birch Society" along with "one third of [the] County Sheriff's force,"⁹¹ a chilling foretaste of what was to occur by August. Apparently, the LAPD was penetrated by Birchers who distributed their literature via cop cars, hardly endearing Black L.A.⁹² By January a foretaste materialized when a so-named "hate bomb" was detonated in Altadena, bordering Pasadena, while the insignia of the despicable Ku Klux Klan was smeared promiscuously side-by-side with a swastika as a protest against Negroes moving into an otherwise Euro-American neighborhood.⁹³

A Klan rally then was slated for Pacoima, then subject to an influx of Negro homebuyers.⁹⁴ Part of the so-called "white backlash" against Black resistance also occurred in the Soledad Canyon in northern L.A. County (far less than a marathon jog from Pacoima) when hundreds showed up for yet another Klan rally, albeit

87. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 15 June 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1470.

88. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 2 June 1966.

89. *People's World*, 29 May 1965.

90. *People's World*, 5 June 1965.

91. *People's World*, 24 July 1965.

92. Marine, *Black Panther*, 125.

93. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 13 January 1966.

94. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 15 September 1966.

most of them were described as “newsmen or hecklers.”⁹⁵ By June 1966, a Negro weekly in L.A. headlined that a “local hate group” was “behind the plot” to assassinate Dr. King and “mass murder...virtually all the Negroes in the U.S.” The accused, Herman Lee Henry, was said to have plotted to “put poison in gelatine, which would be sold to Negroes.”⁹⁶

* * *

When the rebellion in South L.A. detonated on 11 August 1965, Dorothy Healey and other CP leaders were hundreds of miles away at a statewide gathering. Upon getting the news, she and the other comrades boarded a plane headed southward and assembled at an emergency confab at the home of William Taylor. Invited were comrades who resided in the epicenter of rebellion. “I’m in the curfew area,” she said later, “but I’m a little bit north and west of Watts.” She noticed that “those stores which had a reputation of having gouged and cheated, the big chains or furniture stores—including one owned by my cousin by marriage, i.e., Martin’s, where there were credit rackets of all kinds...these were the places that got burned,” giving events a socio-political cast.

Her recollection was that “I was one of the few white people in the whole community” then, yet she was taken aback when Negro comrades welcomed the arrival of the National Guard since they—supposedly—were more “disciplined” than the trigger-happy police.⁹⁷

This difference led to a profound divergence in the CP, whose holy writ was the unity of the working class in its own political party. There were those who thought that this bedrock principle obviated the organizing of the “Che-Lumumba Club,” which amounted to an all-Black club. In a sense, this was a response to both the immediate and the long-term. The former was relevant in that the sledgehammer blows pounded on the CP and left-leaning unions in its orbit eroded the very concept of working-class unity and as noted, created a vacuum filled by the recrudescence of the Nation of Islam, which had been left for dead after Hiroshima, along with its then allied notion of the “Asiatic Black Man.” But under the tutelage of Malcolm X in particular, the Nation pivoted neatly toward identification with a rising Africa, theretofore shunned as its colonial status was not seen as sufficiently inspiring. (As noted, external aid from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Libya also played an essential role in this process.) In that sense, reality itself shifted in a way that became difficult to ignore: hence, Che-Lumumba. In the long term, this club was a response to an often-unacknowledged

95. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 22 September 1966.

96. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 23 June 1966.

97. Dorothy Healey, Oral History.

fissure in the settler state which was founded initially on class collaboration between and amongst European colonists, complexifying mightily the goal of working-class unity. Post-1964, as the ruling Democratic Party moved to implement anti-Jim Crow legislation, Euro-American workers particularly but not only in Dixie defected to the GOP, laying the groundwork for proto-fascist trends that emerged full-blown by 6 January 2021.⁹⁸

Once more, in the short-term Che-Lumumba provided the CP with leverage and influence in the materializing forces arrayed around the BPP, as the case of Angela Davis demonstrated. On the other hand, this trend was greeted with less than unanimity by comrades, creating pressures that led to a CP split in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union. Similarly, given that the “Black Power” trend, which drew from the same well as Che-Lumumba, was often favorable toward China as it split from Communist parties globally, not least from Moscow, this set the stage for the BPP itself turning on the USSR, which was preparatory for digging its own grave—for this Black force found it hard to understand that “white” Moscow and Washington were not in cahoots against “colored” China, the news coming from Southern Africa notwithstanding.⁹⁹

In other words, post-1965 provided a straining stress test for left and militant detachments, that not all passed with flying colors.

In the Southland, Dorothy Healey has portrayed herself as favorable toward the initiation of Che-Lumumba, though forthrightly she also concedes that her powers of recall were often more precise where her stances were obviously correct. “For the first time in the history of the party, such a thing was officially done” and, she remarked, by the dawn of the 1970s this was “still very controversial.” She found objections to the club “spurious” since, similarly, all white formations also materialized based on geography. Prof. Davis, she said, would not have joined the CP but for this club because of her pre-existing relationships with the Alexander family—including Franklin, Deacon and Charlene Mitchell—and her periodic presence in the city because of her graduate work in San Diego. Adding to the complications was that legislative barriers, such as the still operative Subversive Activities Control Board, meant there were no CP conventions from 1961 to 1966, barring huddling for mutual benefit.

Healey emphasized that Che-Lumumba was complemented by “our equal activity,” perhaps “even greater” of organizing among Euro-Americans, an admonition posited by Black Power elements. They also “organized truckloads of food” in the aftermath of August 1965, as a number of grocery stores were torched to a fine crisp. But she polemicized against the notion put forth by “Maoists” and

98. See, e.g., David A. Bateman, et al., *Southern Nation: Congress and White Supremacy After Reconstruction*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018. See also *The January 6th Report: The Report of the Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the United States Capitol*, New York: Celadon, 2022.

99. Home, *White Supremacy Confronted*.

even some Panthers that "all power grows out of the barrel of a gun." No, she countered, "mass movement" is the source of power—though the problematic rarely acknowledged was that a settler society based on class collaboration tortured this admirable idea.

Yet even before the onset of Che-Lumumba in the wake of August 1965, there were difficult political challenges. Healey has recalled the "big struggles" involving CORE, not only involving housing desegregation but also "Woolworth's and [J.J.] Newberry's" and related retailers. These battles were "very important and big and popularly accepted. From there, however, CORE went into a big struggle...in Torrance" about "opening up the housing tracts, to allow Blacks to either rent or buy, mostly to buy. Very big demonstrations were held, but they had no significant continuity," especially given the tyranny of distance, the seemingly endless sprawl of the Southland which complicated organizing and communicating alike—another difference between the relatively compact north and elongated south. "It was more difficult to mobilize particularly with the police attacks that were always present at the demonstrations...big demonstrations" that "had some significance."

The CP also coordinated with SNCC or "Friends of SNCC" as they were termed regionally, which went "through very difficult times and finally it dissolved here," said Healey, or more precisely, absorbed into the BPP. But the two—CORE and SNCC—during their flowering performed admirably in dispatching forces to Dixie where they endured "beatings, clubbings and being thrown in prison by the hundreds and hundreds." Like others, she points to yet another hinge moment: the 1964 Democratic Party convention in Atlantic City where the "Freedom Democrats" were not "seated" in favor of segregationists, spawning Black alienation and fury at what amounted to white supremacy, feeding ultimately the blossoming of the BPP and related contingents.

In the Southland these currents roiled the waters leading to what Healey called "great fights in the party because there was one Black Communist who kept insisting how important they were," speaking of the Nation of Islam and Black Nationalism more broadly. "That was Cyril Briggs. Our national line didn't consider them very important. We considered the NAACP more important. But the Muslims were growing by leaps and bounds and in the center of the Muslims...became the man known as Malcolm X," whose visibility and popularity made it difficult to posit a "correct estimate" of forces, a must for any CP. The confrontation often came down to Briggs versus James Jackson, the Black Communist with roots in Virginia, who had the advantage of having a megaphone at his disposal: he was editor of the *Daily Worker*, the CP's prime periodical. Says Healey, he "had an absolute hatred against Malcolm X and all that he thought Malcolm X represented"; he even "criticized SNCC" on similar anti-Black Nationalist grounds because in Alabama "it had adopted the symbol of the black panther. And Jim made some comment...that he thought it would be better if

they'd adopted as a symbol the American eagle. Well, our young Black Communists inside the Communist Party just erupted" and "demanded a public retraction;" this was occurring in the years 1965 and 1966, when tempers were fraying in any case.

Healey was a notable presence in the Southland, becoming a regular host on the Pacifica Radio station KPFK-FM by about 1959 (today, I host a regular program on their airwaves), to the consternation of the House Un-American Activities Committee.¹⁰⁰ "Probably more than any Communist at that time," she said boastfully, "I was [in public] speaking," including the then popular program of prominent Negro intellectual, Louis Lomax: "I was on his program quite often," she recollected. Like Al Richmond, the CP editor in the Bay Area, she was well aware of the "very great objective differences between north and south. I mean they might as well be two different states as far as character and ethos and anything that makes an area distinctive was concerned. And that's true everywhere," not just in the CP—and I might add, not just in the BPP. "[Y]ou'll find that in the labor movement, that battle between north and south." Thus, in the bountiful days of the CIO, their "headquarters" were sited due north; "we always used to call them the Market Street Commandos because they'd just go ahead and make all the decisions for the whole state without consulting us," where population, resources and, often acumen itself rested. (As we shall see, there was a similar phenomenon in the BPP where the Oaklanders were heavily dependent upon funding from the south, though decisions were centralized in the East Bay.) "We were just looked at as the colony and they were the mother country," reflecting unwittingly the structures of U.S. imperialism.

Political import was the consequence, as demonstrated in the New Politics Conference in East Los Angeles in September 1966. It was a "very, very big conference." Indicative of the moment, "it was really the first time in twenty years," said Healey, that a "conference of this kind was being called, one which would try to unite the liberals and the left together into one [formation] and fight to build an independent organization around the big issues that were confronting" the multi-racial working class. But she and her comrades ran into a buzzsaw as embodied in the future publicist for Cleaver and future columnist for the *Los Angeles Times*, Robert Scheer, who demanded a "boycott" of incumbent Gov. "Pat" Brown in battle with the eventual victor, Ronald Reagan, then en route to the White House by 1980, where he spearheaded a global crusade against socialism and national liberation. The conference was wounded severely as a result and was unable to fulfill its promise. Perhaps more troubling, she thought, was that the then young Communist, Carl Bloice, backed Scheer, indicative of a growing rift in the ranks that became a yawning chasm at the time of the collapse

100. *San Francisco Examiner*, 28 July 1963, Box 5, 1371 57 185 9E3 3-20-06, Wheeler Files, HUAC Records.

of the Soviet Union in 1991. Worse, 1966 also witnessed the victory of Proposition 13 at the polls, a racist housing referendum, that too divided the labor movement.¹⁰¹

* * *

Eldridge Cleaver proved to be one of the more consequential BPP leaders and assuredly the most important cadre from the Southland.

Born in 1935 to parents with roots in Arkansas, by 1948 he had run afoul of the authorities, installed at a so-called "Junior Forestry Camp" maintained by the L.A. County Probation Department at Mount Baldy. By 1955 he had been exposed to Marx and Machiavelli, the two ideological poles in his evolution, with the latter ultimately prevailing as he turned on his erstwhile comrades and defected to conservative Christianity after returning from exile in Algeria and France in the 1970s. It was also behind bars that he endured what amounted to a nervous breakdown, indicative of his mental fragility. By 1958 he had arrived at San Quentin and its five-story stone structure. A turning point occurred in April 1959 when he obtained a typewriter, and from that point forward, he churned out a torrent of words, including best-selling books and an overly shrewd campaign to win the affections and allegiance of the San Francisco attorney Beverly Axelrod, whose campaign on his behalf won his freedom in late 1966. However, he was grappling with other matters simultaneously, including what his biographer calls "latent homosexuality."

By the time of Cleaver's obtaining a keyboard he had been taken ideologically by the Nation of Islam and by his first parole rejection in 1961 had joined with them in civil disobedience, a hunger strike against injustice of the prison authorities. There was also objection to the slaying of Booker T. Johnson—"Booker X"—a Nation leader slain by guards. Then it was on to Folsom, yet another stop in his prison circuit; although not necessarily more commodious, it did contain a dam and powerhouse, a chapel, a hospital, a sewage disposal plant—even a locomotive. In the aftermath of Johnson's death, he began reading *Freedomways* regularly, the left-leaning quarterly (I used to write for them) initiated by Esther Cooper Jackson (the spouse of James Jackson), Shirley Graham Du Bois, Jack O'Dell (then a close advisor to Dr. King), John Henrik Clarke, and others. His acquaintance with Axelrod became a life-altering event; she had served as leader of the NAACP chapter in Modesto and eventually counsel for the sainted Cesar Chavez, principal of the farmworkers. Then it was on to Soledad, where Black guard Sidney Walton sponsored an African history and

101. Dorothy Healey, Oral History.

culture class. Cleaver and his then close comrade "Bunchy" Carter—ultimately a chief of the L.A. Panthers, controversially slain at UCLA in 1969—wrested control of this instruction away from the Nation by the onset of 1966, an important landmark in ideological struggle.¹⁰²

Thus, the charismatic "Bunchy" Carter—embodiment of L.A. Panthers—was present at the creation of Iodestar events. In addition to shaping Cleaver, this man with a face of black alabaster with eyes like black diamonds was seen eventually as the "Most Dangerous Man" in L.A.,¹⁰³ yet another reason for his premature demise. As for Cleaver, by March 1966 heretically he had turned against Elijah Muhammad of the Nation, deriding him as living beside the Black Bourgeoisie in a "19 room mansion" while Dr. King, then in Chicago, was sited in a "rundown slum."¹⁰⁴

Cleaver was moving steadily toward BPP philosophy, perhaps unbeknownst to himself. After dismissing Muhammad, he slapped down the Poet Laureate of Black Nationalism, then known as Le Roi Jones; it was a "piratical book," he said insultingly of his latest, "tossed out by Le Roi to make some bread.... I do not fully understand what he tried to do."¹⁰⁵ But mirroring Cleaver's contradictions and anticipating his flip-flops of the 1970s, he asserted, "I'm proud of what Le Roi did in this book, in that he evoked so much of what I myself know, feel, have felt."¹⁰⁶ He was quite taken with the Newark troubadour's book *Home*. There was indeed a battle in his prison cell for the heart and soul of the often-erratic Cleaver, between various trends within Black Nationalism.¹⁰⁷

As time passed, the vague outlines of the BPP began to take form in his consciousness. By mid-1966 the African Culture Class, he said, "no longer plays such a big part in my daily activity."¹⁰⁸ But ever the opportunist when he spotted a "long plug for Ron Karenga" in the *Saturday Evening Post*,¹⁰⁹ one could easily imagine that Cleaver—a man with a delight in the spotlight—might veer in his direction.

But then he veered again, requesting the "draft program" of the CP, "basic material which I must assimilate," he insisted,¹¹⁰ and confessing, almost weeping, that listening to Paul Robeson "used to bring tears to my eyes when I was a youth."¹¹¹ "I am not a Communist," he conceded in May 1966, "but I

¹⁰² Gifford, *Revolution or Death*, 39, 54, 55, 56, 70, 74, 78, 81, 89, 92, 97, 100, 101, 115, 116.

¹⁰³ Elaine Brown, *A Taste of Power*, 118.

¹⁰⁴ Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 14 March 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1005.

¹⁰⁵ Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 19 March 1966 in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1026.

¹⁰⁶ Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 20 March 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1030.

¹⁰⁷ Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 29 April 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1271. See also Le Roi Jones, *Home: Social Essays*, Brooklyn: Akashic, 2009.

¹⁰⁸ Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 21 June 1966 in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1494.

¹⁰⁹ Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 8 July 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1560.

¹¹⁰ Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 10 April 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1159.

¹¹¹ Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 15 April 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1187.

certainly do want to know what the Communists are up to." But this type of literature was verboten, though the prison permitted "Fascist Literature," referring to *Tocsin* and "right wing literature" generally, including "[William] Knowland's junk,"¹¹² i.e., the publisher *cum* politician of the East Bay and former majority leader of the U.S. Senate. This was an aspect of a wider racist regime that also meant, said Cleaver, that "administration of Soledad Central is virtually lily white. They do not have a Black Sergeant here, not one single Black Lieutenant and only one Black counselor that I know of." But already Cleaver was looking forward noting with "smug satisfaction" the success of the magazine whose staff he joined upon release from prison: *Ramparts*. Ecumenically, he also requested books by the NAACP anticommunist theoretician Herbert Hill, Nkrumah, Calvin Hemton and George Breitman.¹¹³

Still, there was a through line in his thinking that encompassed his Nation period and post-Nation too, and that was his obeisance when it came to the recently slain Malcolm X. "I'm going to have to hibernate for about a year...I must study, study, study" his work.¹¹⁴ He inched inexorably toward a Black revolutionary posture: "I saw in today's paper," he said in April 1966, "a mention of a button being worn by...people on the UC campus which reads," emphatically, "SUPPORT BLACK REVOLUTIONARIES."¹¹⁵

The foregoing provides a flavor of the variegated vividness that shaped Cleaver, who during the intermittent jailing of Newton and Seale often was presented as the voice and face of the BPP. Inexorably, his 1968 book *Soul on Ice* meant that he had burst across the sky like a colorful meteor. Given his star-crossed relationship with homosexuality, it was virtually mocking that one of his first jobs as he was growing to maturity was as a bouncer in a lesbian after-hours club run by his older sister, Wilhelmina. His youth was disrupted when his father left his family, and his mother became a janitor in the L.A. public schools. Yet with all that, a watershed in his life of pandemonium came when he was able to reach the progressive attorney Beverly Axelrod, a mentee of BPP consul Charles Garry and a force in her own right from her office at 450 Franklin Street in San Francisco. Her shaping of the BPP image was exhibited when the iconic photograph of Huey P. Newton sitting in a rattan throne chair in black beret and leather jacket with spear in hand was composed at her residence at 150 Carmel Street. Melanie Margaret Kask, who knew her, felt that it was relevant that before Cleaver, she was involved romantically with the premier anticommunist barrister Franklin Williams and had been "engaged to be married" to Congressman John

112. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 20 May 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1370.

113. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, circa April 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1162.

114. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 21 April 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1213.

115. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 25 April 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1246.

Conyers of Detroit.¹¹⁶ Even after dedicating herself to Cleaver, she told this caged inmate that prominent attorney Cecil Poole “inquired about when I am going to marry Conyers.”¹¹⁷

It was Axelrod who was largely responsible for springing Cleaver from prison. She was well connected in that regard. From her law school days she was close to Leonard Garment, top aide in the Nixon White House: By 1966 she was “showing off my city” to him.¹¹⁸ It is likely that she never shared with the infamously jealous Cleaver what Garment revealed: that she was “attractive,” he said, to the point that “I chased [her] around the office furniture” until she consented to a “long-running, sporadic love affair.” Later, when demonstrations erupted at the notorious 1964 GOP convention in San Francisco, it was because Garment—apparently unwittingly—had supplied admittance to this cosseted event to Axelrod and her comrades, eventuating in “nationally televised civil rights demonstrations in the Cow Palace and the convention plaza. They were actually more like riots.”¹¹⁹

Retrospectively, it does appear that this tall, dark-skinned, heavy-lidded man exhibited some of his less admirable traits in wooing her with the prospect that a free Cleaver would become akin to her spouse. Yet perhaps she should not have been surprised by this turn of events: “each of us,” she announced in March 1966, “manipulates in our own way thru this world.”¹²⁰ However, within months of leaving prison it was evident that this dream would not become reality. His apparent traducing of Axelrod displayed the persona of a con man which reached a climax by the mid-to-late 1970s when he dabbled in conservative Christianity and became a designer of pants for men that featured a codpiece, accentuating the genitals. “There is no rest for the wicked,”¹²¹ wrote Cleaver. Or as a fellow inmate once told him, “You’re the only man I know who started on the bottom and went down.”¹²² Indeed.

By 1954 his prison file revealed that Cleaver was “described as unmanageable by his mother from age 10.” There were “many instances of his father and mother quarreling violently” with “physical abuse or throwing household items.”¹²³ He was apprehended carrying four sacks of marijuana worth

116. Kask, “Soul Mates,” ii, 4, 14, 25, 27, 34, 119. See also “Social Evaluation” of Cleaver, 28 July 1954, Box 10, Beverly Axelrod Papers: “Many instances of his father and mother quarreling violently...stage of physical abuse or throwing household items.” See also John D. Hix, “The Political Evolution of Eldridge Cleaver,” M.A., CSU-Dominguez Hills, 1995.

117. Beverly Axelrod to Eldridge Cleaver, 8 April 1966, in Kask, “Soul Mates,” 1150.

118. Beverly Axelrod to Eldridge Cleaver, circa early 1966, in Kask, “Soul Mates,” 891.

119. Leonard Garment, *Crazy Rhythm: My Journey from Brooklyn, Jazz and Wall Street to Nixon's White House, Watergate and Beyond*, New York: Times, 1997, 44, 105.

120. Beverly Axelrod to Eldridge Cleaver, 2 March 1966, in Kask, “Soul Mates,” 905.

121. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 4 March 1966, in Kask, “Soul Mates,” 925.

122. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 20 March 1966, in Kask, “Soul Mates,” 1030.

123. Report 28 July 1954, Carton 32, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

about \$400.¹²⁴ As he recounted later, it was on "June 18, 1954" that he "began serving a sentence" for "possession of marijuana" and then his eclectic gestalt began to take shape as he joined a "group [that] was espousing blatant atheism" by way of "reading history, philosophy, economics and sociology and political science," leading to his being "amazed to discover how confused people were." In a bout of solipsism, "I decided that the only safe thing for me to do was go for myself," an indelible motif of his life until his death. "I became an extreme iconoclast. I attacked everything." He read Marx too—then had a "nervous breakdown." Then this future Black leader "became a rapist...practicing on Black girls,"¹²⁵ a cruel abomination detailed in his bestselling *Soul on Ice*.

By 1962 the elusive Cleaver had attracted the attention of Attorney General Stanley Mosk, as this inmate was seen as being at the heart of the "Muslim problem" in his prison.¹²⁶ Naturally, authorities blocked Cleaver's attempt to solicit legal aid: "your letter to...Loren Miller is returned," he was instructed since it was not "free of innuendoes and untruths."¹²⁷ Cleaver was avidly following the Nation of Islam in L.A. and kept abreast of Mosque #27 there. Like others, his interest was piqued by the authorities' slaying of "Brother Ronald T.X." or Stokes, but the warden would "not allow me to send my manuscripts to 'Muhammad Speaks,'" the Nation organ.¹²⁸ This led to his contacting Loren Miller and his blockage led him to Axelrod's door.

In the meantime, the inmate who referred to himself as "L. Eldridge Cleaver" was initiating official correspondence honorifically "In the Name of Allah" and prein acknowledged that "I grew up, developed and lived all my life on the wrong path—the path of crime, violence and sin," but now that he had become "Eldridge X," he had begun to turn his life around.¹²⁹

By late 1964 the inmate had managed to make contact with Axelrod, and she in turn had enlisted the future San Francisco mayor—then state legislator—Willie Brown, who attested that he had "known [her] for a number of years" and that her client, Cleaver, had an "unusually deep understanding of social issues."¹³⁰ The foremost writer Norman Mailer echoed this praise, saying of Cleaver, "if the man were an athlete, I would say he is a natural,"¹³¹ referring to his way with words. (Troublingly, Cleaver referred to this wordsmith who virtually defined the term "male chauvinist" as "my idol."¹³²) Even Norman Podhoretz, then a middling Jewish intellectual in New York, praised Cleaver's "literary talent," meaning he

124. Document from Department of Corrections, 18 June 1954, Box 10, Beverly Axelrod Papers.

125. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 25 June 1966, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

126. D.B. Frady to Stanley Mosk, 28 December 1962, Carton 32, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

127. Warden to Eldridge Cleaver, 24 October 1962, Carton 32, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

128. Eldridge Cleaver to "Brother!" ca. 1962, Carton 32, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

129. "Eldridge X" to "Adult Authority," 9 March 1963, Carton 32, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

130. Willie Brown to Adult Authority, 24 November 1964, Carton 32, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

131. Norman Mailer to Adult Authority, 27 October 1966, Carton 32, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

132. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 5 September 1965, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

was a "remarkably promising writer."¹³³ The increasingly literate Cleaver had begun reading Dostoevsky behind bars.¹³⁴ "I went to the library yesterday," said the diplomatic charmer to Axelrod, "to stack up on Thomas Wolfe since he is your favorite author."¹³⁵

Weeks after August 1965 she had begun to address him as "Dear Eldridge" after he had contacted her about his case; by then she admitted that "you possess me totally."¹³⁶ She supported her sentiments materially. Said Cleaver, "I received the record player and the three players," that were now sited in his "cell" of "basic green: green walls, green doors, green locker, green bed."¹³⁷ Then she sent him the tantalizing music of Archie Shepp and Miles Davis to keep him engrossed.¹³⁸ His unsated appetite then requested music by Donald Byrd, Albert Ayler, Carla Bley, Ornette Coleman, Cecil Taylor, Anthony Williams, Eric Dolphy (fellow Angeleno), Lou Rawls and the "hip and out-of-sight" Oscar Brown, Jr.¹³⁹ Listening to saxophonist John Coltrane at one point, he exuded, speaking of his signature tune, "My Favorite Things" ...out of sight!"¹⁴⁰ He encouraged "my own sweet darling" to send him more of this music when he told her persuasively, "I can almost hear Coltrane in the background of your letter."¹⁴¹ Persistently, he demanded albums for his listening pleasure¹⁴²—and without fail she complied. There was a conspicuous omission: "To a certain extent," he said, "down home blues is reactionary."¹⁴³

Albums from her poured into his tiny green cell, along with books from the likes of Nkrumah and Calvin Hernton. He fretted understandably that "people are going to think that the things I've written were influenced by Hernton's book," referring to *Sex and Racism in America*, which anticipated Cleaver's own manderings about rape of women of European and African descent in his best-selling *Soul on Ice*.¹⁴⁴

Looking back, it is easy to suspect that Cleaver was a devotee of the idea that faking sincerity and authenticity was critical to survival. Even faux self-criticism was part of his psychological arsenal: "That is typical Eldridge," he said once, "constantly digging his own grave! I just can't stand prosperity. I have never been able to let anyone come close to me.... I have suffered from shame, perhaps an

133. Norman Podhoretz to Adult Authority, 27 October 1965, Carton 32, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

134. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 28 October 1965, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

135. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 25 October 1965, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

136. Beverly Axelrod to Eldridge Cleaver, 19 October 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 384.

137. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 14 February 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 828.

138. Beverly Axelrod to Eldridge Cleaver, 21 April 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1218.

139. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, circa May 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1346.

140. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 15 January 1966, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

141. Eldridge Cleaver to "My Own Sweet Darling," 25 January 1966, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

142. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 2 June 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1422.

143. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 27 September 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1831.

144. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 25 April 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1246. See also Calvin Hemton, *Sex and Racism in America*, New York: Grove Press, 1966. Cleaver, *Soul on Ice*, 14.

inferiority complex that has to do with that time our family went on welfare! What a turning point that was!...I still push people away from [me] or become so disagreeable that they can't stand me." It was "centrifugal madness," according to this budding intellectual. Male chauvinist jealousy was part of the makeup of this future wife-beater, a glimmering of which was shown when he admitted, "I envied Lenny types their educations," speaking of Garment. With a flourish of alleged self-scrutiny he asked, "Who are you Eldridge, who are you?" then quoted Oscar Wilde: "Each man kills the thing he loves."¹⁴⁵ Knowing what we know now, it is hard to credit his self-criticisms; for example, "I am becoming a sniveler, always crying about something," wallowing in "personal and private despair.... I say to myself Eldridge you have become nothing but a critic. Your basic approach to everything is to seek out flaws, to find fault.... you get your kicks of criticism...you are really sick!"¹⁴⁶ To be fair, these final few words were piercingly accurate.

As ever, she tried to reassure him, saying that Garment "wants me to be happy" and "offered to help you in any way he can," strange coming from a Nixon man whom Cleaver came to despise. Cleaver may have smiled grimly when she added, "I am not a family oriented person.... I grew up disliking most of my family,"¹⁴⁷ opening the possibility of isolating her psychologically, the approach of a master manipulator.

When he told her that "I'm drawn irresistibly to the Bay Area. I wouldn't go back to L.A. on a bet,"¹⁴⁸ it was easy to surmise that this was just another psychological gambit on his part, inflating her hopes. After all, pasted on the grim walls of his cell were scenes of Hollywood and L.A.¹⁴⁹ "I'm a Dodger fan," he confessed enthusiastically and "have opened up my heart to baseball."¹⁵⁰ Besides, he continued to pursue the news from back home: "Did that bond issue get passed that was for a hospital in Watts?" he asked in June 1966.¹⁵¹ Months later, he would be released from prison, changing the trajectory of the BPP and, to a degree, the U.S. left writ large.

145. Eldridge Cleaver to Bevely Axelrod, 4 March 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 920.

146. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 2 May 1966 in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1388.

147. Beverly Axelrod to Eldridge Cleaver, ca. March 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 959.

148. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 29 May 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1409.

149. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 26 June 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1519.

150. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 25 November 1964, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

151. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 12 June 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1455.

Chapter 9

Armed Propaganda? 1964-1969

By early December 1966, Cleaver was released from prison into the custody of his attorney/romantic interest, Beverly Axelrod. Their relationship lasted only a few months after that, his ever more fervent professions of love beforehand notwithstanding. (His bestselling book was dedicated to her: "To Beverly, with whom I share the ultimate of love."¹)

Soon, Cleaver affiliated with the recently born BPP and was present, albeit as a journalist, during their transformative demonstration in Sacramento May 1967, arms in hand—a kind of armed propaganda—which captivated the news media and African Americans more specifically. Soon, the top two leaders—Newton and Seale—were in and out of prison and tied up fighting their cases, which catapulted the unstable Cleaver into a de facto role of leadership, proving disastrous for the organization—at least as far as the Oaklanders were concerned. After an April 1968 shootout in Oakland with the authorities, he felt compelled to flee, first to Cuba then Algeria. However, a changing climate in Algiers, and his own foibles, led him to France, then back to the U.S.—tail between his legs—kowtowing profusely and prostrating himself obsequiously, begging for forgiveness after years of inflammatory rhetoric.

Subsequently, Kathleen Cleaver, his spouse, traced the serpentine path that led him from a dank prison cell to the apex of political notoriety. He spent four years at San Quentin, 1956-1960, where he joined the Nation of Islam as "Assistant Manger of the San Quentin Mosque." By 1963 a "bullet went over Eldridge's shoulder and killed Booker," the Minister, a signal that led to his departing the Nation after a similar bullet did away with Malcolm. This led to his organizing an "African American History and Culture class to follow Malcolm's teachings." Alprentice "Bunchy" Carter, who was to shepherd one of the first Panther chapters beyond Oakland—in Los Angeles—was his "second in command while they were in Soledad together." He was released on parole from Soledad on 12 December 1966, met the then Kathleen Neal in March 1967 and

11. Cleaver, *Soul on Ice*, v.

they married after a whirlwind courtship. Together they climbed the mountain to the pinnacle of party leadership.²

* * *

While in Folsom, a notably unforgiving prison, Cleaver concocted the idea of a CORE-backed campaign against Jim Crow there, referring to the "'lily white' staff" and the pursued policy that meant "white inmates are [a] privileged class," that "Mexicans receive slightly better treatment than Negroes but treatment inferior to that received by whites," while the darkest of them all were accorded the worst treatment, thereby further punishing former property confiscated without compensation. "Negroes are often the victims of physical brutality at the hands of white officers," said this firsthand witness. "White inmates are never shot if seen involved in fist fights, Negro inmates are invariably shot at and in most cases hit for the same activity." "Many of the guards" had been "avowedly supporters of Barry Goldwater and the John Birch Society." Prior to the 1964 election the guards became fond of asserting, "Just wait until Barry is in the White House!"—then you would glean the real meaning of oppression. Afterward they seemed "to blame Negro inmates for the defeat of Goldwater." Anticipating formulation of the construct of the "Prison-Industrial Complex" and hours before the detonation in Watts, Cleaver had spoken eloquently of the "gigantic, multi-million dollar bureaucracies organized around Crime and Punishment/Rehabilitation."³

As horrible as Folsom was, it seemed that Soledad—where George Jackson also came to prominence—was a horror show. On 11 January 1966 at 11:52 a.m., he informed Axelrod that he was "being transferred to Soledad today...no advance notice."⁴ As he explained later, he was "was at work in the Bread Room when two guards came for me and marched me straight off to the waiting bus," leaving behind "typewriter, books, manuscripts, papers, etc."⁵

This was chastening, as he told "Dear Beverly." "I was flatly refused a temporary assignment as a clerk or in the library on the grounds that I am 'an

2. *The Black Panther*, 8 August 1969.

3. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 10 August 1965, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB. See also, Executive Staff, 3 May 1966, Corrections-Administration-Director's Staff Meeting Minutes, F3717: 244, CSA: "Several additional legal actions have been filed by Black Muslims...any restrictions on this group be based on the organization's race segregation attitudes which can foster administrative and control problems, rather than on religious grounds." In same collection, see also Minutes, 5 October 1966: Breakdown of "Watts Riot arrests...nearly all arrested were Negro but there were 151 whites, 68 Mexicans and six other races."

4. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 11 January 1966, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

5. Eldridge Cleaver, #A-29498 to Beverly Axelrod, 14 January 1966, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

articulate spokesman 'for the Black Muslims' though he was "no longer affiliated." Still, he was "questioned by the Classification Committee as to our relationship" and "why you send me money."⁶

Then he was "charged with leading a group of Muslims in a march" on the Warden's office. He wanted legislators—Mervyn Dymally of L.A. and Willie Brown and Phil Burton of San Francisco—to investigate. "I am sick and tired of being kicked around," he grouched. "In this institution they have Ku Klux Klanners, Nazis, Black Muslims and all kinds of homosexuals holding down clerical jobs...I am going to attempt to roll with the punch," he said half-heartedly.⁷

Cleaver proved to be such a slippery character, it becomes difficult to analyze the renderings leading to his freedom in December 1966. Knowing his would-be lover, Axelrod, was oriented leftward made him speak favorably of Robeson—or, perhaps, he was genuine and not opportunistic? Once in his cell he was listening to this hero's dulcet tones which reminded him of a past pleasantry: "I used to have a scrapbook filled with nothing but men of words with expressions on their faces such as this on Le Roi's [Jones] face. I had one of Fidel that was out of sight." And that brought him back to Fanon: "I only read it once, while I was in Folsom and it burned its way into my brain. But I must read it again," speaking of the Martinican's oeuvre as "The Bible."⁸ The ideologically inconsistent Cleaver reveled when he saw Castro on television: "how beautiful the Cuban Revolution is," he rhapsodized, a few years before he left the island in a hailstorm of mutual recriminations. "Yet I wonder what became of Che [Guevara]," then on a global mission of assisting revolutionary processes, but the speculative Cleaver remarked how "a revolution devours its own children," falling victim to the propaganda that Che had developed a rift with Havana. "Who can deny that?"⁹ The truly informed, for starters.

Cleaver's attraction to Fanon was a discernible theme of his later prison years. By June 1966 he "got all shook up" over "Chilly Willie of the Deacons for Defense" with a "rifle and a pistol in his car" during a famed Mississippi march led by favorite son, James Meredith. "'Responsible' leaders," he said with disgust, "rushed him into a huddle" away from the fray, which led to an "audible groan" that "could be heard throughout the section of the [imprisoned] tv audience occupied by 'The Wretched of the Earth,'" Fanon's masterwork, a "book that must be faced. It cannot be got around. It takes nerve to read especially if you're feeling

6. Eldridge Cleaver to "Dear Beverly," 18 January 1966, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

7. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 18 January 1966, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB. See also Beverly Axelrod to "Dear Phil," 8 July 1965, Box 6, Beverly Axelrod Papers.

8. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 8 June 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1436. See e.g., Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, New York: Grove, 2005.

9. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 4 January 1966, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

wretched!"¹⁰ In short, as the fecund phenomenon that was "Black Power" was being unveiled officially on national television in 1966, Cleaver, a witness, was filtering this event through the prism of Fanon. But could one take Cleaver seriously, given his deficit in self-awareness? "I have changed so many times that I don't really know myself, who or what I am?"¹¹

Still, the perspicacious inmate saluted Stokely Carmichael when he made a "very significant announcement concerning a new alliance between SNICK and the Muslims," a "very shrewd maneuver."¹² Months later, speaking at Morgan State University in Baltimore, Carmichael—after denouncing "Black Student 'Uncle Toms,'" spoke movingly of a "young man with me now. His name is Eldridge Cleaver," said to be producing "some of the most profound writing that has come out in the country from Black men."¹³

Cleaver's engagement with Fanon and the informal launching or latest version of Black Power in June 1966 were pivotal moments in his evolution. The same held true more than a year earlier when he became aware of the assassination of Malcolm X, which, over time, led him to believe that he was this martyr's legitimate heir. For he too was a prisoner, autodidact, militant and seeking a viable organizational home. On the day in question, in February 1965, Cleaver was watching *The Strangler*, a now forgotten movie. A fellow inmate, "Silly Willie," approached him and "whispered into my ear" the deathly words, "Malcolm X was shot." For Cleaver, "the earth seemed to reel in orbit. The skin all over my body tightened up" while "on the screen Victor Buono had a woman by the throat and was frantically choking the last gasping twitches of life out of her slumping body." Strangely, "at [that] moment I declared myself for Malcolm X," since "I possessed some prestige among the Muslims in the prisons of California primarily because dating back to about [1960] I had taken an active role in carrying on a ceaseless program of proselytizing new converts and campaigning for Religious Freedom for Muslims" and "even appealed a few times to the United Nations," thus attracting adherents to Cleaver's own banner. "I ran a regular Public Relations campaign [for] Malcolm in Folsom" and "I saw to it that copies were made of his speeches." Cleaver drew the inference that the "assassination marked a historic turning point in Black America" and began "defending Malcolm X at a secret meeting of the Muslims in Folsom." He "announced that I was no longer a follower of Elijah Muhammad," that it was "no longer possible to ride two horses at the same time." In a gesture imbued with symbolism, he "destroyed" the portrait of Elijah Muhammad in his cell and replaced it with one of Malcolm.¹⁴ This was

10. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 13 June 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1462.

11. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 22 June 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1500.

12. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 28 July 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1636.

13. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 14 July 1967.

14. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 19 June 1965, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB. See also Cleaver to *Rolling Stone*, 27 May 1976, Reel 53, Black Panther Documents: "Prison officials made it clear that

an abrupt turnabout from a time in 1963 when the then "Eldridge X" had organized dozens of inmates on behalf of rights for Nation believers.¹⁵

Yet the flexible Cleaver, who had toggled so often between Marx and Muslims, may have realized it could have been part of a wider trend. In San Diego, for example, there was talk of a man in Kenya "who claimed to be a Black Muslim and Communist Party member."¹⁶

In February 1967, a few months after he had gained freedom and was on track to the superintendence of the BPP, he recalled a time when "Soledad, San Quentin and Folsom were the prisons with the highest concentration of adherents to Islam." But then the "most important reason for the decline of the Muslims in the prisons is the inexplicable failure of the outside officials of the Nation of Islam to render any legal assistance to the Muslims behind the walls," leading to the theological conundrum or the "ideological humiliation of asking the white devils" of the American Civil Liberties Union for legal aid. He assailed Loren Miller as one of the "bourgeois attorneys" who had handled Nation cases incompetently and, suggested Cleaver, gained a judgeship in return. Prematurely, he declared the Nation "dead in prisons," gauging that the "most popular books being read by Black inmates in prisons today" included works by Malcolm, Fanon and Che, "none of which lead to Mecca."¹⁷ That was accurate—to a point. However, the attraction of Islam, contrary to Cleaver, was far from extinct societally. In Westwood alone there was not only Kareem Abdul-Jabbar but a number of his teammates, including the star guard once known as Walt Hazzard,¹⁸ along with a host of others.

There was a certain logic to Cleaver's explanation of his ideological evolution, although he was such a trickster, if he held up his hand with five fingers intact one would be justified in suspecting that at least one was a prosthetic, a fake, inauthentic. Like many who heroized the gangster branch of the lumpen, he was not above deceitfulness and hoodwinking. Still, there was a formidable barrage of propaganda directed at the Nation, making it difficult for even the staunchest of believers to maintain equilibrium. Ed Montgomery, the San Francisco journalist, who frequently tormented the organized left, went after the Nation hammer and tong with a series of lurid stories focused untactfully on the "Black Muslim Faker" identified as "Wallace Fard," whom the Nation deified as one who brought true knowledge to Elijah Muhammad himself. But in the pages of the *San Francisco Examiner*, he was portrayed as an "enterprising racketeering

they favored the followers of Elijah Muhammad to the followers of Malcolm X.... I was set up to be killed by Chicano inmates...plot failed only because I knew one of the Chicano cats in L.A."

15. Eldridge X to Warden, 9 June 1963, Box 10, Beverly Axelrod Papers.

16. Edgar M. Gillenwaters to James Slaton, 2 June 1964, Box 167, Robert Carlton Wilson Papers.

17. Remarks by Eldridge Cleaver, February 1967 in Scheer, *Eldridge Cleaver*, 13-25, 13, 15, 16, 17, 25.

18. Mufti, *American Caliph*. 75. As shall be seen, Islam was becoming a marked influence in Black Los Angeles.

fake...he is not a Negro...[his] true name is Wallace Dodd...born in New Zealand on February 26, 1891...mother was a Polynesian." He was said to have spent time in San Quentin after having arrived in the U.S. in 1913 and residing in L.A.¹⁹

Cleaver's remonstrations notwithstanding, as he was penning his critical analysis of the Nation a work stoppage was occurring at San Quentin involving 900 or more Black men. On the third day a Euro-American was killed and, said a reporter, "Black Muslims and hoodlums" were blamed. "Thirty percent of 1000 of...population are Negro; 18 percent are Mexican-American who side with the Caucasians in this dispute."²⁰ As Cleaver put it, when he entered San Quentin around 1958, 30% of the inmates were Negroes, but about a decade later, he maintained, they were "in the majority."²¹ This telling increase was a counter-revolutionary response to Black unrest, but this enlargement also created a breeding ground for Black Militancy, especially after the prison revolt at Attica in 1971.

If Axelrod had been paying closer attention to what he was actually saying, she may have been a bit more reluctant to plunge ahead. Thus, Cleaver "deeply desire[d] to help carry forward some of the work that Malcolm was doing," and came to see the BPP as the appropriate vehicle to that end. But he also realized that the "most devastating and effective attacks we used to make against...James Farmer" of CORE and Black Communist Ben Davis were "that they were united with honorary sisters," married, that is, to Euro-Americans. "I have always been extremely demagogic on this point," he said in a rare burst of honesty. "When [Kwame Nkrumah] married an Egyptian woman instead of a Ghanaian I marked it against him," said this moral enumerator. "Many men have been kept from power because of this thing," to which he had "given a lot of thought." No less than the "future of America" was in the balance—but then, this broken-field runner daintily pirouetted and reassured his supposed "Soul Mate" that "in the past most such cross color alliances have been liabilities to aspirations," but "in the future, they will be assets."²²

With Malcolm on one shoulder and Fanon on the other, Cleaver sporadically began to outline a political program which was partially imported into the BPP by the time he became a preeminent member of its hierarchy. His subsequent prominent presence in Algiers and his full-throated advocacy of armed struggle were tokens of his growing influence. Weeks after the August 1965 conflagration, he remarked, "In the domestic colony I want to see the California Freedom

19. *San Francisco Examiner*, 28 July 1963, Box 5, 1371 57 185 9#3 3-20-06, Wheeler Files, HUAC Records.

20. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 19 January 1967.

21. Remarks, October 1968, in Scheer, *Eldridge Cleaver*, 182. See also Orisanmi Burton, *Tip of the Spear: Black Radicalism, Prison Repression and the Long Attica Revolt*, Oakland: University of California Press, 2023.

22. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 4 November 1965, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

Democratic Party move into Watts, the Fillmore District [San Francisco], Oakland," speaking of a version of Mississippi's formation of the same name. To be fair, bearing the imprint of the organized left more so than ascendant trends to this day, he astutely had a global outlook, asserting that the "central plan in their platform should be appeal for economic aid to China, Cuba, Russia, North Vietnam, Pakistan, the Eastern European socialist countries, France (yes, yes)," an extension of Black America's embrace of the nation that welcomed Richard Wright, Josephine Baker, James Baldwin. Also, on this lengthy list were "Indonesia," days before the U.S.-sponsored overthrow of founder Sukarno, "Egypt" of G.A. Nasser, "Ghana" of Nkrumah, months before his dislodging, and the latter's comradely ally, Guinea-Conakry. Sharpening his class sword, Cleaver opined that this alignment "will provide the stage for a decisive confrontation with the Black Bourgeoisie," since "Society Negroes have already gotten what they want," like the "right to sleep in the same room in fancy hotels." He insisted that the "people of the domestic colony," meaning the bulk of Black America, "must turn away from the leadership of the Black Bourgeoisie. They must go for themselves."²³

Cleaver may have sensed what was unfolding in San Diego, where a "Negro 'Civil War'" was said to be in motion in a "housing fight...between those representing low-income families and the other groups of more affluent Negroes" who objected to an "influx of low income families," for it would "damage their property values" because of enhanced "population density." Hence, "3000 property owners in the Valencia Park, Encanto and Skyline areas of Southeast San Diego," said this observer, were enmeshed in a class revolt.²⁴ San Diego was a ticking time bomb, a conservative bastion in a state that was now on fire. Commemorations of Malcolm X's birthday had become *de rigueur*, but in the self-defined "America's Finest City" they had become occasion to blow off steam, too. "Riots disrupt Malcolm X meeting" blared the headline sketching the gathering in the border town, involving "500 youngsters." Then, after Karenga demanded a holiday to mark the birthday of the departed leader, a wave of absenteeism hit schools in Los Angeles, parallel to the overall unrest in the Southland. Youth were in the vanguard once more; disorder rocked Fremont High School, once the site for anti-Negro riots, and at Compton High School 1500 students walked out.²⁵ Indicatively, Karenga and his comrades chose the emotive date of 22 February 1966—near the first anniversary of the assassination—to hold their first public event, with 200 assembled.²⁶

The globalization of the plight of Black America notwithstanding, with an unc customary flash of self-insight, Cleaver recognized that "through my writing I

23. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 17 September 1965, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

24. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 6 April 1967.

25. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 25 May 1967.

26. Scot Brown, *Fighting for US*, 75.

discover how American I really am."²⁷ Yet since his typewriter's clatter "sounds like a piledriver or a machine gun,"²⁸ he was riveted on the soon to be realized idea that transforming his homeland was his overriding priority.

Fanon and Malcolm aside, he continued to demand books by Norman Mailer, Ken Kesey, Negro psychologist Kenneth Clark, California feminist and erstwhile Communist, Tillie Olsen²⁹—and premier U.S. Communist economist Victor Perlo. He was not only seeking political and intellectual stimulation. "Writers are hatchet men," he said, "and I know how they hack each other up,"³⁰ a facet that he too was to display. Thus, he was not a fan of Ralph Ellison: "I see his grinning teeth between every line he writes."³¹ Shortly thereafter, Axelrod, beavering away on his behalf per usual, conveyed "good news! McGraw Hill has agreed to publish your book," meaning *Soul on Ice*, which ejected him into the ionosphere.³² "Soul," he growled at one point, "how I overwork that word"; yes, but he was not alone during that conflicted era, and inserting it into the title of his book likely aided its popularity. Like many, he had "no theological concept of soul,"³³ a further step toward secularity.

This was a shot of adrenaline into the bloodstream of his ego. Cleaver began to compare himself to Jesus's apostles: "Paul's genius was that of an elaborator [*sic*] of Christ's teaching," which led him to speculate, "could I be Malcolm's Paul?" Then he became intrigued by Zionism: the "book on [Theodor] Herzl looks interesting," speaking of this ideology's founder. "Me, another Sammy Davis?" was his response, referencing the best-known Black Jewish man, leaving the inference that he too could be so inclined in that direction.³⁴ Yet even his delusions of grandeur had limits: "I don't even think subconsciously that I just might be God."³⁵ He was ever aware of his alleged importance even while behind bars, especially as it concerned his precious wordsmithing: "once I write something down I hate to throw it away," contributing to his "packrat tendencies."³⁶

At the same time Cleaver was being structured by Marx and Machiavelli, Fanon and Fidel—and particularly Du Bois, the "greatest Black writer-thinker known in history"³⁷—he maintained a curious fascination with Herzl. He had "long been fascinated by Herzl as the model par excellence of the focal point and fountainhead of a monumental nationalist movement. He reminds me very much

27. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 22 November 1965, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

28. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 1 December 1966, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

29. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 15 June 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1470.

30. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 16 June 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1480.

31. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 16 June 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1485.

32. Beverly Axelrod to Eldridge Cleaver, 16 June 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1538.

33. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 17 September 1965, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

34. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 13 July 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1583.

35. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 14 July 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1587.

36. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 25 June 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1515.

37. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 2 August 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1654

of Malcolm X"; thus, he sought to study the notorious Stern Gang, notorious Zionist terrorists and gangsters.³⁸ Again with the fickle Cleaver one could not be sure if by invoking Judaism he was simply seeking to appeal to his Jewish romantic partner; she was not displeased with "your reading of Jewish history."³⁹ She did not comment on his reading of Cesare Pavese, "a Communist" "imprisoned under Mussolini," said Cleaver.⁴⁰

Yet weeks later, the mercurially evolving Cleaver, in the midst of studying the revelatory work on the JFK assassination, Mark Lane's *Rush To Judgment*, and Sylvia Plath's penetrating poetry, announced, "I reject many forms of Black Nationalism."⁴¹ Months earlier, the ever self-transforming Cleaver felt that he had "really outgrown the negative aspects of the Black Muslims," with whom he had conducted a storm-tossed affair, ignited partially by the "personal spiritual crisis" he endured "following the suspension and subsequent assassination of Malcolm."⁴² Hence, by June 1966 addressing uncommonly "Mrs. Axelrod," he continued in that vein by telling her that "in the eight years that I have been in prison, I have changed so tremendously and in so many different directions" that "I feel like a synthetic man"⁴³—meaning inauthentic?

By September 1966, along that line, he was regularly reading the radical U.S. weekly, the *National Guardian*.⁴⁴ His enhanced ideology was being fed by Axelrod, who told him bluntly, "I don't think Stokely [Carmichael] can really believe all that nonsense he sometimes spouts, he's been around too much."⁴⁵ It did not take long for Cleaver to consider writing for *Freedomways*,⁴⁶ the Black Liberation journal initiated by people within the orbit of the CP. Yet a week before his release, he admitted, "I have no love for getting hung up on those internecine quarrels of the Old Left,"⁴⁷ a veiled reference to those akin to the CP. Thus, days before he departed prison he was marveling over the "rediscovery of Self that is going on amongst Black people today," which has "all the fervor of a revival."⁴⁸

Like a seesaw—and to a degree like the Black Liberation Movement as a whole—Cleaver fluctuated between adherence to certain forms of Black Nationalism and a Marxist-inflected discourse; in other words, he seemed to be preparing for a leadership role in the BPP, even before it was born. While the fires in Watts were still being suppressed, he stressed boldly that "THE CIVIL RIGHTS

38. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 31 July 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1651.

39. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 26 November 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 2058.

40. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 21 December 1965, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

41. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 1 September 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1714.

42. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 3 February 1966, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

43. Eldridge Cleaver to "Dear Mrs. Axelrod," 15 June 1966, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

44. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 6 September 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1735.

45. Beverly Axelrod to Eldridge Cleaver, 10 September 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1850.

46. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 1 October 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1858.

47. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 2 December 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 2074.

48. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 6 December 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 2092.

MOVEMENT [IS] ANALOGOUS TO A COLONIAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT LED BY THE NATIONAL BOURGEOISIE” and, ergo, was akin to “THE BLACK BOURGEOISIE’S DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION.”⁴⁹ Yet more perceptively in anticipating his 1970s devolution, he mused, “Sometimes I worry about becoming an Uncle Tom.”⁵⁰

Already he was exhibiting habits that were to accelerate post-prison: imbibing of various intoxicants, which beclouded his thinking, putatively shedding light on his hairpin ideological turns. “My favorite drug,” he told Axelrod in September 1966: “Bevocain [*sic*]...first time I was exposed to bevocain was in Folsom...I was addicted.”⁵¹ When he wrote that “my right foot must be more splayed out than the left,”⁵² one had to wonder if what was at play were onerous prison conditions combining with this apparent addiction—or a veiled ideological metaphor. For in his olden days in L.A. he was “deeply involved in the narcotic world,” bulking his bankroll: “I had two cars,” considered becoming a “pimp,” illuminating the BPP’s subsequent obsession with the “lumpen” and the disastrous engagement with “gangsta” [*sic*] culture. In his haze of toxic masculinity he even considered “castrating” a foe back then.⁵³

It was not long before he moaned, “I feel like I’m wandering through a wasteland of the soul. I feel so useless.”⁵⁴ Then he waxed philosophical: “I prefer a future to a past...those who have had rich lives dwell in the past. Those who have had empty pasts dwell in the future.”⁵⁵

Still, somehow Cleaver “made it to Jewish services,” then flitted to someone “talking distractedly about Robert F. Williams,” the Black man who praised “Negroes with guns” before being forced into exile in Cuba and China. He admired his “really great speech” just rendered in China which “took the correct position: hard-hitting but not racist, like Malcolm was at the end. He explicitly called for unity between Black and white revolutionary soul brothers. The wave of the future,” then wandered distractedly when he brayed “[Charles] De Gaulle is out of sight!”⁵⁶ He was possibly unduly taken by De Gaulle’s intermittent conflict with U.S. imperialism, for example, recognizing the People’s Republic of China years before Washington sought to do so. Weeks before his release, he disclosed, “my mind has been on, of all places, China.”⁵⁷ This was connected to another preoccupation of his: “I’ve been doing a lot of research on the United

49. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

50. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 28 January 1966, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

51. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 7 September 1966, in Kask, “Soul Mates,” 1745.

52. Eldridge Cleaver to “Dear Beverly,” 25 January 1966, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB. Cleaver may have had bupivacaine in mind.

53. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 17 September 1965, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

54. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 13 September 1966, in Kask, “Soul Mates,” 1764.

55. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 10 October 1966, in Kask, “Soul Mates,” 1895.

56. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 3 September 1966, in Kask, “Soul Mates,” 1724.

57. Beverly Axelrod to Eldridge Cleaver, 12 November 1966, in Kask, “Soul Mates,” 2007.

Nations and the U.S. Congress" as he became "very interested in working out the rationale for Afro-America's membership in the U.N."⁵⁸

Axelrod complied, of course, with his latest book demands and continued to massage his spasmodically fragile ego. (He was seeking books by Carlos Fuentes and Stern Gang militant Geula Cohen.⁵⁹) His "secret dream," he allowed, was to open a "bookstore" with a "selection of clothing styles" (possibly anticipating his ill-fated design of pants with a codpiece). Yes, there would be "hardcore jazz" too, opening in the "Bay Area first, then one in L.A."⁶⁰ Brightly—conceivably overdoing it—she responded enthusiastically with the notion that "Third World Book Store is a great name. You're so great with titles[!]"⁶¹ she gushed, then deposited yet another \$50 into his coffers,⁶² then another,⁶³ followed, as night follows day, by his request for a newer "record player,"⁶⁴ and her dispatch of a new typewriter to him.⁶⁵ These further gifts facilitated his "becoming an authority on Western & Country Music."⁶⁶

She also fed his fascination with Malcolm X, keeping him abreast on the visit to her city by Alex Haley, his amanuensis, then residing at the home of the affluent attorney Melvin Belli.⁶⁷ But then she exposed—possibly by accident—the stumbling block that was to destabilize her relationship with her imprisoned "Soul Mate." Haley, then involved romantically with a Euro-American woman, was disconcerted by "people staring" at them. He shared with Axelrod conversations he had held with Sammy Davis, Jr., in a similar intimate relationship, "and others about this."⁶⁸ Earlier, Cleaver had been inspired by Haley's handiwork, Malcolm X's autobiography—at least so he told Axelrod, his "darling hermit."⁶⁹

But Cleaver, who if nothing else was highly persuasive with words, proceeded to turn on the charm reassuringly. "I have gotten the reputation of being a writer,"⁷⁰ he said modestly. "What I want to do is write," he declaimed.⁷¹ Addressing her as "my darling lawyer," seemingly blubbing on the page, he informed her passionately that "you've only been gone four hours and already I feel a slight pain in my side—in the spot of my missing rib." The sly romantic then added, "how wonderful it is to share a mutual, reciprocal love!" The

558. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 26 November 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 2055.

559. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 7 September 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1745.

600. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 26 May 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1400.

601. Beverly Axelrod to Eldridge Cleaver, 15 June 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1476.

602. Beverly Axelrod to Eldridge Cleaver, 24 June 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1512.

603. Beverly Axelrod to Eldridge Cleaver, 29 July 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1645.

604. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 1 February 1966, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

605. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 16 December 1965, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

606. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 18 December 1965, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

607. Beverly Axelrod to Eldridge Cleaver, 2 August 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1658.

608. Beverly Axelrod to Eldridge Cleaver, 3 August 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1660.

609. Eldridge Cleaver to "My Darling Hermit," 22 January 1966, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

770. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 25 January 1966, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

771. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 4 November 1965, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

contradictory Cleaver, who had cycled between Islam and Marxism already, had alighted on what was to dominate his declining years. Already, he was “beginning to feel naked without my religious medal”—as he saluted the farmworkers’ battle in Delano—and concluded by telling her redundantly, “no matter what way I look at you, I love you.” And by the way, he emphasized, “BE WITH THE LORD,”⁷² an unusual message to leave with a Jewish woman he was then courting. Such a mishmash of passion, politics and Christianity were intermittent threads of clashing imperatives throughout his life. To indicate this was no fluke, he continued the next day: “what I need at this moment is just to squeeze you in my arms” and, oh yes, he stressed, “BE WITH THE LORD.”⁷³ The next day: “I love you perfectly and I need your love.” Then he adverted to an unwitting admission as to why his thinking might be so ideologically inconstant. “I get most of my news from the Huntley-Brinkley Report and from Walter Cronkite on TV,” while acknowledging, correctly, “this can’t help me very much.” Then he pivoted away from damning admission to supposed rigor since this televisual gruel “allows me to think more of more fundamental things and to do some hard-core studying in history, economics” and “social sciences generally.” Sure, he confessed unashamedly, “I’m not too up on current developments—but,” he said in a typical overestimation, “it is always easy to catch up.”⁷⁴ Although he was already styling himself as a savior for Black America, he admitted in early 1966, “I have not been able to keep up with the news for several months,” making unclear how he would be able to devise strategy and tactics absent the raw material of breaking news and supplementing long-term trends.⁷⁵

The next day came his declaration: “My habit has become to fit you into everything I do,” even “this morning” when “I helped mow a huge lawn.” When younger “I used to have a lawnmower—which I probably swiped from some place—and I used to go to the better neighborhoods and mow lawns for a little small change,” then more shameless professions of eternal love.⁷⁶ “Dearest heart” was his frequent salutation.⁷⁷

On the following day: “You are constantly on my mind...Beverly! Beverly! Beverly!”⁷⁸ The day after, a head fake: “I’m temperamental, moody and demanding...full of storms and troubles,” before returning to promulgations of

72. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 1 January 1966, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

73. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 2 January 1966, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

74. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 3 January 1966, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB. Retrospectively, I assay that a major ideological weakness of virtually every sector of the U.S. Left is that although they immersed themselves in the classics—Marx, Engels, Lenin, Du Bois, Che, et al.—there is little evidence that they immersed themselves likewise in day-to-day trends nationally and globally. Is that because this was not easy to accomplish pre-Internet?

75. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 24 February 1966, in Kask, “Soul Mates,” 874.

76. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 4 January 1966, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

77. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 14 January 1966, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

78. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 5 January 1966, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

undying love: "We are meant to be inseparable...you are the most important person in the world for me."⁷⁹ "I can think of nothing except you,"⁸⁰ he babbled. Then the inevitable: "I attended my first session of Group Therapy."⁸¹ Since he viewed writing as "a form of therapy," these collective sessions too should have illuminated his inner life.⁸²

Even before she had met Cleaver and his case took hold of her personal and professional life, Axelrod had a career as a respected advocate. In 1964 she was acting as counsel for the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party,⁸³ and later found herself in Washington, D.C., defending the highly publicized provocateur Jerry Rubin of the Youth International Party before the Un-American Activities Committee,⁸⁴ one more step toward the discrediting of these inquisitors.⁸⁵ "Restraining" this body was her goal, and the resultant confrontation was "historic...nothing like this has ever happened before in this country." She was "very happy to personally serve a subpoena on Ed Montgomery," her hometown reporter who would continue to bedevil the left; his odious presence "makes the rest of the paper look radical." The "hearings opened with a row between me and the committee with me screaming (like a fishwife)."⁸⁶ From there it was on to New York City, where she stayed at the residence of her law school pal, Nixon aide Leonard Garment.⁸⁷ She tried to reassure her perpetually insecure partner, Cleaver, that even then she "ran up a \$50 phone bill" seeking to negotiate his release. Still, she had time to visit the Harlem Writers Guild, also in pursuit of Cleaver opportunities, but Sylvester Leaks tested her—and him—asking if the increasingly popular inmate was familiar with Georgi Plekhanov, the legendary Russian revolutionary and philosopher. But again, à la Haley, she received a premonition of what her relationship with a freed Cleaver would look like: HWG "men were warm & friendly to me," she recounted, "the women cold & hostile—a phenomenon that I expected."⁸⁸

The closer Cleaver came to being released, the more nervous Axelrod was becoming about the prospects for their interracial romance. "I just read something from a speech by Le Roi Jones (in an SDS publication, no less) where he talked about 'Jewish girls who castrate Negro men by marrying them'—O Woe."⁸⁹

79. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 6 January 1966, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

80. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 27 January 1966, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

81. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 7 January 1966, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

82. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 25 June 1966, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

83. John Pemberton, Jr., American Civil Liberties Union to Axelrod, 6 August 1965, Box 8, Beverly Axelrod Papers: "As [a] lawyer who took MFDP challenge depositions...."

84. Jerry Rubin to Beverly Axelrod, ca. 1966, Box 6, Beverly Axelrod Papers.

85. Beverly Axelrod to Eldridge Cleaver, 12 August 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1682.

86. Beverly Axelrod to Eldridge Cleaver, 16 August 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1690.

87. Beverly Axelrod to Eldridge Cleaver, 18 August 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1692.

88. Beverly Axelrod to Eldridge Cleaver, 22 August 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1694.

89. Beverly Axelrod to Eldridge Cleaver, 12 November 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 2007.

So praised, Cleaver dug in his heels about his rampant homophobia, perhaps seeking to put her in her place after she displayed mettle on Capitol Hill. To be sure, he praised the work of James Baldwin, at least *The Fire This Time*, the penultimate book by this fierce opponent of homophobia.⁹⁰ As he saw it, he was only channeling Le Roi Jones and Calvin Hernton. Sure, there was “such similarity of thought and expression as to give one pause”: this was a given. Yet, he insisted, “my views [are] not ‘anachronistic’” as she had charged. “I’m not a bigot,” he countered unconvincingly. Why not “take a position against homosexuality,” what about “Sodom and Gomorrah?” No, he clamored, “I don’t endorse it” since “I stand for heterosexuality. I think women are for men and men are for women. Period” in that “two homosexuals are as mismatched as two left shoes.” He conceded reluctantly, “I would even vote for one for President. But gay is not the way.”⁹¹

Reading the correspondence between the two, one is tempted to respond like a viewer watching a horror movie, warning the heroine that her friendly partner is actually a sociopath and worse—and willing to expose his true colors. “People are so devious,” he said, much too knowingly, “and bottomlessly treacherous. It takes a long time to find them out. But then [it] invariably comes to light.”⁹² How true.

Instead, guilelessly, Axelrod continued to profess her undying love. “My car has over 29,000 miles on it,” was her calculation in late July 1966, “most of them yours...I’m so totally out of things—no more meetings, no participation in any project but you...my world is you.”⁹³ Their surveilled meetings were challenging. “We would sneak in sexual stuff,” she said later, “while we were visiting. I wouldn’t wear pants,” said this competent attorney who admitted she was “obsessed” with him.⁹⁴

Her world was constrained because of her utter devotion to one client. “Right now I’m stewing over finances and have to dig in again to pay bills.”⁹⁵ Days before his being freed, she “went into the office” and “stayed for hours, writing letters pertaining to you. Ten of them.”⁹⁶ She may have been enduring second thoughts about this relationship into which she had fallen. Two days before his release, she informed the volcanically jealous Cleaver that she just “had dinner

90. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 10 September 1965, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

91. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 16 June 1966, in Kask, “Soul Mates,” 1480.

92. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 22 July 1966, in Kask, “Soul Mates,” 1613.

93. Beverly Axelrod to Eldridge Cleaver, 24 July 1966, in Kask, “Soul Mates,” 1626.

94. Undated statement, Box 13, Beverly Axelrod Papers. Cf. Pearlman, *Call Me Phaedra*, 141: Stender “would encourage women in her prison law collective to boost the moral[e] of men [in] maximum security by engaging in whatever sexual activity the women could get away with...she took that risk with Huey [Newton].”

95. Beverly Axelrod to Eldridge Cleaver, 10 September 1966, in Kask, “Soul Mates,” 1750.

96. Beverly Axelrod to Eldridge Cleaver, 26 November 1966, in Kask, “Soul Mates,” 2058. Cf. Pearlman, *Call Me Phaedra*, 141: Stender “would encourage women in her prison law collective to boost the moral[e] of men [in] maximum security by engaging in whatever sexual activity the women could get away with...she took that risk with Huey [Newton].”

with [Congressman] Conyers,"⁹⁷ to whom she had almost become betrothed. "Jealousy is a subject that fascinates me,"⁹⁸ he averred truly. Subsequently in 1978, when he was enmeshed in extensive litigation with Axelrod about the earnings from *Soul on Ice*, he responded waspishly to a query in a deposition: "[The] only thing that I recall about William Worthy is he was Beverly Axelrod's lover."⁹⁹

Finally, on 3 December 1966 Cleaver reported that the authorities "gave me four years parole" with "provision" of a "possible two year discharge."¹⁰⁰ He was released into Axelrod's custody. But their relationship only lasted for a few months, and soon she was sitting forlorn in her automobile, especially after he met Kathleen Neal who became Kathleen Cleaver.¹⁰¹

That mournful state of affairs hardly seemed in the offing upon his long-awaited release. Her comrade Doris Walker, the Communist attorney who defended Angela Davis, "lent" the then loving couple a "cabin up in Mendocino," north of San Francisco, but the idyll did not last. Continued Axelrod, "one of my very good friends, who was Black, at a meeting got up and attacked Eldridge for living with a white woman" in a scene that was "just dreadful"; there was "all kind of stuff like that going on" and "Eldridge felt he could be the second Malcolm X" but not necessarily with a Jewish partner. The emotionally unstable Cleaver "hit me once" in his fury, then abandoned her and, as she was told, "he chose a Black woman whose [*sic*] lighter skinned than you," a reference to the melanin-deficient, blue-green-eyed Kathleen Neal. "She was" accurately described, said a bereft Axelrod,¹⁰² who was subjected to the indignity of sitting outside in her car—her presence seen as tactically inappropriate—during political meetings presided over by her "fiancé [*sic*]."¹⁰³

Again, Cleaver being a roguish mountebank, it is not easy to figure out if he was truly taken—as he said he was—with Axelrod, or rather pretended to be in order to enlist her formidable legal acumen and powers of persuasion on his behalf. A few days after his release he told the Black Left's favorite academic, Dr. J. Herman Blake of Santa Cruz (recall that as a Berkeley student he had invited Malcolm to campus) about how he had been "released from Soledad" and with

* 97. Beverly Axelrod to Eldridge Cleaver, 4 December 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 2086.

* 98. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 17 September 1965, Reel I, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

* 99. Deposition of Cleaver, 4 January 1978, Box 11, Beverly Axelrod Papers. See also Cleaver to *Rolling Stone*, 27 May 1976, Reel 53, Black Panther Documents: Axelrod was "purged from membership in the Modesto branch of the NAACP allegedly for being a Communist," likely at the behest of Franklin Williams, who probably kept his liaison with "Red Beverly" away from the prying eyes of fellow anticommunists.

† 100. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 3 December 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 2078.

† 101. Remarks, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 2060.

† 102. Undated statement, Box 13, Beverly Axelrod Papers. Ms. Cleaver's eyes at times were described as gray or grayish.

† 103. Kask, "Soul Mates," 106.

his "fiancé" they took a "week's vacation up in Mendocino" in a "quaint little cottage on the lip of a cliff overhanging the ocean." Then it was on to his job at *Ramparts*, the muckraking journal in San Francisco; he was now in an "office, fully equipped." Stating the obvious, he said, "getting out of prison has been a red carpet experience for me...from the Parole Agents to the people here at *Ramparts*."¹⁰⁴ As if he only half-believed him, Blake responded in an unusual formulation of ambiguity and suspicion: "I hope you will always maintain the integrity you have as a Black man, for it is easy to be deceived."¹⁰⁵

To be balanced, Cleaver was a product of his hardscrabble existence in L.A.: His environment formed him unavoidably. Then there was his difficult upbringing administered principally by Thelma Robinson Cleaver, born in 1909, and his absentee father Leroy Cleaver, born in 1900.¹⁰⁶ (As said, she spent years as a janitor at Lincoln Junior High School in L.A.)¹⁰⁷ The absentee dad was residing principally in Chicago at the YMCA, 826 South Wabash.¹⁰⁸ His parents by 1966 had barely "spoken a word to each other in 19 years,"¹⁰⁹ not providing an exemplary model of coupledness for him to emulate. Even when together his parents' frequent fights marked him: "Wow! All those Saturday night free-for-alls" was his characterization of their bouts of contentiousness.¹¹⁰ As Axelrod told him, his mother "sounded terribly depressed," exacerbated since her "health is very poor." Besides, she was "despondent over not being able to see you," all unhelpful to his already shredded psyche.¹¹¹ Harry Hay, the queer activist, retained a quote that intriguingly seemed to be crafted with Cleaver in mind, attributed to Russian anarchist Mikhail Bakunin, via the BPP: "All tender, softening sentiments of kinship, friendship, love, gratitude and even honor itself must be snuffed out in him," meaning the "revolutionist"; this "precludes even personal hatred and revenge," only "cold calculation" was mandated.¹¹² "I fell in love with Bakunin," Cleaver confessed, and "sought to incorporate into my own behavior" his teachings.¹¹³

Cleaver's familial ties were minimal, contributing to his lone wolf mentality and a solipsism making it difficult to bond humanly. Cleaver was a chess player, contributing to his confidence in his ability to maneuver psychologically, a trait not aided by his dearth of close relationships—beyond romantic partners, who

104. Eldridge Cleaver to J. Herman Blake, 20 December 1966, Box 3, J. Herman Blake Papers, UC-Santa Cruz (abbrev. J. Herman Blake Papers).

105. J. Herman Blake to Eldridge Cleaver, 9 January 1967, Box 3, J. Herman Blake Papers.

106. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 11 December 1965, Reel 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

107. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 14 November 1988.

108. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 12 March 1965, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 996.

109. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 15 June 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1470.

110. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 27 June 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1524.

111. Beverly Axelrod to Eldridge Cleaver, 28 June 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1529.

112. Bakunin, "The Catechism of the Revolutionist," n.d., Box 82, Harry Hay Papers.

113. Cleaver, *Soul on Ice*, 12. The BPP also publicized Bakunin: *The Black Panther*, 16 March 1968.

then carried the brunt of his weaknesses. (Predictively and repetitively, while imprisoned Cleaver described his "nervous breakdown."¹¹⁴) By mid-1966 his father, sister and brother-in-law visited him—all of whom he "hadn't seen...in 10 years. My own father didn't even recognize" his wayward offspring.¹¹⁵ Cleaver "never refer[red]" to him as "'Daddy 'or 'Father 'or 'Pops'" but, instead, "'Leroy 'or 'Mr. Cleaver 'or 'Your husband 'or 'Your old man'"; he had been "doing that for years," in a structured emotional distancing—his specialty—but, finally his mother objected to his psychological aloofness: "all of a sudden she calls me out of order!"¹¹⁶

Likewise, he confided, "My mother gets bugged if I don't write to her often," no biggie to him. "It doesn't matter with my father but my mother gets bugged...of every member of my family, my mother has been the only one who I could always rely on." He appreciated her and his sister, he alleged: "The rest of them"—his family—"you can have them."¹¹⁷

* * *

Cleaver was present at the creation of the event that thrust the BPP into the glare of publicity floodlights. It was May 1967, a few months after its founding in Oakland, and cadre had traveled to Sacramento to object to legislation with Cleaver, still under wraps because of his parole, tagging along as a journalist for the muckraking journal *Ramparts*. The comrades marched into the majestic Capitol arms in hand, sending legislators and staff alike scurrying to safety. This was armed propaganda guaranteed to snatch attention in a nation where keeping weapons out of the hands of Negroes had been a strategic objective. The comrades did not travel northward to Sacramento in order to scandalize the legislature but—apparently—a historical tide intervened when a startled guard pointed them to the wrong entrance to the viewing gallery, and their misdirected presence would wind up further startling some while enraging others.

At that moment the Panthers were armed not only with weapons, however, but more important, with a particular viewpoint that could have been honed further over time. The wild success of their maneuver also reflected an oft neglected topic: unease with non-violent resistance in the face of bloodthirsty thuggery leaving a steady stream of Negroes battered and maimed. Moreover, there had been a lengthy tradition of armed struggle culminating with the rousing victory—weapons in hand—over enslavement.

114. Cleaver, *Soul on Ice*, 11.

115. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 29 July 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1638.

116. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 6 August 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1670.

117. Eldridge Cleaver to Beverly Axelrod, 16 September 1966, in Kask, "Soul Mates," 1781.

Unfortunately, over time the BPP—not least because of Cleaver's eclectic influence—was not able to strike an appropriate balance between the dual necessities of tactical non-violence and armed self-defense—and offense too, if need be. (Remarkably, despite his subsequent embrace of conservative Christianity, Cleaver continues to be viewed appreciatively by comrades who stayed the radical course, because of his inspiring chapters in New York and elsewhere and his magnetic speechifying most notably.)

At the historic Sacramento manifestation, Newton was unable to arrive, but co-founder Bobby Seale was there. Afterward, he angrily rejected a proposed three-year probation for what he considered to be a righteous action: "You and I know," he told his attorney, that it's "basically economic distress that Black people are caught in that cause[s] rebellious activity"¹¹⁸—so why should he accept any punishment, why not address the root cause? His reproach was addressed to his attorney who, tellingly, was affiliated with the firm founded by Robert Treuhaft, spouse of Communist Jessica Mitford (Decca Treuhaft), and like the BPP's ultimate counsel, Charles Garry, known to be solidly within the orbit of the CP.

His spouse, Artie Seale, recalled entering the Capitol "constantly being surrounded by newsmen." Then they passed "through the swinging gates" onto the legislative floor, as members scattered hither and yon. Having made a point, they departed, leaving behind a cop "who seemed to be in a disturbed state of mind, [he] jumped out and pointed his gun at Bobby and I," then "other policemen drove up...I heard a cop say to another, 'those fucking black niggers.'" She was among the four women in the group who were assaulted verbally.¹¹⁹

The young man who became a martyr in 1968, who answered to the name of "Little Bobby Hutton," was there and recalled being queried about the weapons that he and his comrades were carrying: "We told him we had a right to carry a gun" then "cops snatch[ed] our guns to see did we have a bullet in the chamber...they broke the gun down and actually tried to [break] the guns."¹²⁰

Oleander Harrison was bluntly forceful: "I was armed with a 12 gauge riot shotgun, 18½ long" and was "surrounded by the press.... I saw a sergeant-at-arms snatch a rifle from one of the Panthers" as Harrison spoke to the unnerved future mayor of San Francisco, Willie Brown, then a state legislator. "Little children gathered around us" in apparent awe, then "stupid Ronald Reagan came out and made a statement to the press." He "saw a stupid ignorant racist pig...looking stupid with his revolver in his hand," evidently gobsmacked. But not Harrison: With the intrepidity that came to characterize the BPP he "grabbed [his] shotgun, loaded up and had taken my position." Harrison was a self-professed "juvenile" but betrayed his youth when he was nonplussed when "three swine dogs pointed

118. Bobby Seale to Malcolm Burnstein, ca. 1967, Box 2, Robert E. Treuhaft Papers, NYU (abbrev. Robert E. Treuhaft Papers).

119. Statement of Artie Seale, 2 May 1967, Box 2, Robert E. Treuhaft Papers.

120. Statement of Bobby Hutton, ca. May 1967, Box 2, Box 2, Robert E. Treuhaft Papers.

their shotguns at me and one came to me and measured my shotgun with a tape." Still, "in jail I was jumped twice" by detractors.¹²¹

Emory Douglas, eventually Minister of Culture in the BPP and star graphic artist, was there. Like others, he came to Sacramento to protest the legislation introduced by Assemblyman Donald Mulford designed to bar the brandishing of loaded firearms in public. He recalled sharing fried chicken in their vehicle, heading to a gas station for water—then cops appeared and in their fluster, were "jumping behind cars, on roofs, behind trees and pointing pistols,"¹²² as if this were a reality television show.

Douglas's profile was similar to those of his comrades. Born in Grand Rapids, he had grown up in San Francisco, where his attorney, Malcolm Burnstein, had an office at 900 Haight Street, close by the epicenter of what came to be called the "Summer of Love." He was a compact 5'9" tall and 160 pounds with brown eyes. His father remained in Detroit and his mother, Lorraine Douglas, then 40, was a restaurant manager. He was then single and depicted himself as a "freelance artist." As for "monthly earnings...nothing," leaving plenty of time for forays to Sacramento. His plans? "To continue working in the commercial art field," a vow that was vindicated. He was a key member of the two dozen plus who entered the Capitol on noon on 2 May 1967 and, in the process, inaugurated a new era of Black Liberation.¹²³

As an artist, he graphically portrayed the era he helped to shape. An illustrated card he drew featured a Black father asking, "Son, what do you want for Christmas?" Answered the child, "A machine gun, shotgun, a box of hand grenades, a box of dynamite and a box of matches,"¹²⁴ with the quotation ascribed to Cleaver.

The turn toward arms—and possibly arson—had an inflamed impact, for then even Gov. Reagan backed stricter gun control, a reform that lost strength with the decline of the BPP.¹²⁵

Yet Negro columnist Bill Lane was wholly unimpressed with this display. It was arranged by "whites interested in putting Negroes on par imagewise" [*sic*] with the National Rifle Association. Then he turned bitterly on "writer Ellie [Eldridge] Cleaver" backed by "rich white rightists [who] have been supplying

121. Statement by Oleander Harrison, ca. May 1967, Box 2, Robert E. Treuhaft Papers.

122. Statement by Emory Douglas, 2 May 1967, Box 2, Box 2, Robert E. Treuhaft Papers.

123. Documents from Municipal Court of California re: Emory Douglas, Jr., 1967, Box 2, Box 2, Robert E. Treuhaft Papers.

124. Undated card, FCSF F1 De 110, CSU-Fullerton.

125. Winkler, *Gunfight*, 237: 24 men and six women, says this author contrary to the above, were involved on that fateful day in Sacramento. It was also reported that Mark Comfort and armed cadre among the Oakland Direct Action Committee were in Sacramento on that fateful day: See e.g., Daniel Crowe, *Prophets of Rage: The Black Freedom Struggle in San Francisco*, New York: Garland, 2000, 211.

funds for some time to splinter Black Nationalist groups.”¹²⁶ “Ellie” was gleeful about this Sacramento manifestation since it “gave” the party “a million dollars worth of publicity and helped spread the Panther message.”¹²⁷

As noted, paramount leader Huey P. Newton was not in Sacramento, but with strategic good sense he did “authorize Beverly Axelrod, John George, Malcolm Burnstein and Charles Garry to act as my attorneys.”¹²⁸ Axelrod was not first on the list by accident, for even though her relationship with Cleaver had collapsed, before emotional distress sent her into exile, Newton had come to rely on her counsel.¹²⁹ Subsequently, BPP chieftain Donald Cox recalled the anxious moment when Newton had “been wounded, captured and charged with killing one policeman and attempting to kill another.” It was Axelrod who became Newton’s courier, ferrying advice to Cox.¹³⁰ This was not due to happenstance. Though Newton admitted, “I do not like to write very much,” he detailed “when Beverly came up to see me” in detention and “everyone believed she was a Black woman...even the Blacks thought she was Black. So I as Defense Minister have decided to declare her Black. From this day on,” he announced in 1967, “she is referred to as a Black woman. She is to receive all privileges as such status provides.” Such was his handwritten message from prison with “censored” stamped on it prominently.¹³¹ Later a Newton intermediary conveyed the heartwarming message that “Huey sends his love to you & always asks how you are getting along.”¹³²

This was his response to a time when Axelrod by her own admission “got totally involved with the Panthers...they were having meetings at my house.” She was then liaising with Charles Garry, BPP counsel, a “good friend of mine.”¹³³

* * *

In the heat of Cleaver’s torrid correspondence with Axelrod, Pettis Perry—the Black Communist—died. He was “my friend,” said Charlotta Bass simply, who too was not long for this planet. This dual loss further weakened what was coming to be called—including by Cleaver—the “Old Left.”¹³⁴ However, as matters evolved, and in particular with Angela Davis joining the membership

126. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 11 May 1967.

127. *The Black Panther*, 6 April 1969.

128. Handwritten Statement by Huey P. Newton, 30 October 1967, Box 7, Beverly Axelrod Papers.

129. See, e.g., *San Francisco Chronicle*, 1 November 1967.

130. Statement by Donald Cox, 12 April 1994, Box 7, Beverly Axelrod Papers.

131. Huey P. Newton to La Verne Williams, 8 December 1967, Box 7, Beverly Axelrod Papers.

132. La Verne Williams to Huey P. Newton, 16 May 1968, Box 7, Beverly Axelrod Papers.

133. Undated statement by Axelrod, Box 13, Beverly Axelrod Papers.

134. *People’s World*, 9 October 1965.

rolls, the CP was far from dead and continued to be a kind of gatekeeper or entrée for the global left, upon whom the BPP came to rely, forcing the two parties into a stormy affair of convenience.

Thus the co-optation of Bettina Aptheker, the Berkeley student activist, into the ranks was a coup prefiguring the amassing of a crowd of 3000 to hear Dorothy Healey speak at Ventura College in the face of an attempt to bar her presence.¹³⁵ Yet when she addressed 600 amassed at UC Irvine, sponsored by Students for a Democratic Society, she was jeered in a report deemed worthy of retention by HUAC.¹³⁶ Farther south her comrade Bill Taylor was barred from speaking at Grossmont College in El Cajon.¹³⁷ Only recently, the corpulent Communist had toured Eastern Europe and was slated to speak at "The Controversial Bookstore" at 3627-30th Street in once dandy San Diego.¹³⁸

By 1966, as Cleaver was poised to exit prison, Healey set a record for a Communist in an electoral contest, garnering almost 85,000 votes—more than 5% of the total—in a race for County Assessor. Numerous high school and college students volunteered to work in her campaign. Typically, in the contest as to which jurisdiction would raise the most for the CP organ, L.A. again prevailed with \$34,000, San Francisco coming in second and far behind at \$8500.¹³⁹ At that point 10,000 copies of the party paper were printed for Western distribution including 2820 subscriptions and about 5000 sold or disseminated by various means.¹⁴⁰

The widespread, systematic construction of campuses in the Golden State not only opened the door for youth to be educated in realities—at Merritt and Laney colleges in Oakland, for example—but also set the stage for a natural venue for a round-robin of "teach-ins" on the growingly unpopular war in Vietnam. The version at UCLA in late 1965 attracted 8000 over a 12-hour period,¹⁴¹ followed by a "Peace Walk" of 3000 through the streets of L.A.¹⁴² Then in April 1966 a teach-in at UCLA attracted once more 8000 eager learners.¹⁴³ Suggestive of how widespread antiwar activism had spread was the report that "Black Nationalists attempt[ed] [the] seizure of [the] Spring Mobilization Peace March" in San Francisco in 1967.¹⁴⁴ Also indicative was the page-one banner headline in the *Los*

135. *People's World*, 13 November 1965.

136. *Santa Ana Register*, 28 May 1966, Box 31, 1345, 69, 91, 19E3, 3, 21 3, Wheeler Files, HUAC Records.

137. *San Diego Tribune*, 12 December 1967, Box 6, Gwartney Collection.

138. Report, 11 March 1965, Box 7, Gwartney Collection.

139. *People's World*, 11 June 1966.

140. *People's World*, 8 October 1966. For Healey's final total see *People's World*, 22 October 1966.

141. *People's World*, 20 November 1965.

142. *People's World*, 4 December 1965.

143. *People's World*, 2 April 1966.

144. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 21 April 1967.

Angeles Free Press on "Draft Resistance in Watts" penned by the soon to be acclaimed novelist Louise Meriwether.¹⁴⁵

Once more, other factors helped to account for the relative success of the CP in the Golden State and the simultaneous birthing of the BPP. For one, unlike the national CP organ under the editorship of James Jackson, its California counterpart was sympathetic to the germinating Black Power.¹⁴⁶ Days before he passed from the scene in 1966, another withering blow likely surpassing in importance the death of Pettis Perry, Cyril Briggs editorialized on the importance of Black Power, comparing it to what he knew well and what had garnered him prestige in the first instance: his instrumental role in the historically heroic African Blood Brotherhood—a harbinger of the BPP. And more to the point, he emphasized what to him was non-negotiable: the "Right of Self-Determination of Negro majorities in the South."¹⁴⁷

The City of Angels also had the advantage of housing Franklin and Kendra Alexander, a dynamic duo, the couple responsible for recruiting the San Diego graduate student Angela Davis to the Che-Lumumba Club. By 1967 he had been charged in Chicago with "mob action, disorderly conduct and obstructing a peace officer" in the aftermath of a stormy demonstration.¹⁴⁸ Then the local press, which identified him as chairman of the CP-affiliated Du Bois Clubs, reported that he was accused of walking through turnstiles to catch a train without paying, along with his "wife Kendra."¹⁴⁹ All of this was duly placed in his file maintained by the House Un-American Activities Committee. Like a Johnny Appleseed of radicalism, it was Franklin Alexander who was present at Houston at the historically Black campus of Texas Southern University when students erupted in protest—and he was held as a result on \$25,000 bail.¹⁵⁰

Just after Briggs died, in veritable homage to his memory, 15,000 assembled in Berkeley for a Black Power powwow featuring anti-Jim Crow crusaders James Bevel, Ivanhoe Donaldson, and the then reigning symbol Stokely Carmichael, who received a standing ovation.¹⁵¹ The epitome of this recrudescant trend, Carmichael was on a tour of the region, including a stop at San Francisco State University,¹⁵² which then promptly erupted in a trailblazing protest that buoyed the BPP. Stirring the pot of protest was the visiting professor from Newark then

145. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 21-27 July 1967.

146. *People's World*, 23 July 1966.

147. *People's World*, 10 September 1966.

148. Report, 2 June 1967, re: Franklin Alexander, Investigative Name Series #5, Box 1.72075 1-72-75, 9 E3 3-17-3, Record Group 233, HUAC Records.

149. *Chicago Tribune*, 18 July 1967, re: Franklin Alexander, Investigative Name Series #5, Box 1.72075 1-72-75, 9 E3 3-17-3, Record Group 233, HUAC Records.

150. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 26 May 1967.

151. *People's World*, 5 November 1966.

152. *People's World*, 19 November 1966.

known as Le Roi Jones.¹⁵³ Refuting the admonishment he had received from Axelrod, among others on the left, the tall, ebony-hued former philosophy major at Howard University assailed the “Red-baiting” of “Brother Paul Robeson and our saint Brother W.E.B. Du Bois.”¹⁵⁴ Carmichael was appearing in the city by the bay in the aftermath of a fatal shooting of a Black 16-year-old by a trigger-happy cop in the soon to be gentrified Hunter’s Point. “Frisco not Watts,” said the *Los Angeles Sentinel*—“yet.”¹⁵⁵ The SNCC leader also made it to Oakland’s McClymonds High School, shortly after the formation of the Newton-Seale BPP.¹⁵⁶

Carmichael’s “talk a triumph in Watts,” said an observant Communist journalist of his appearance at Will Rogers Park, where an estimated 6500 assembled over the objection of County Supervisor Kenneth Hahn, who obstreperously opposed his appearance.¹⁵⁷ (Likely there were agents of surveillance present, as there were a few months prior in June when 125 gathered to hear Karenga and the prominent local activist Tommy Jacquette. A “taped confidential report” was deposited.¹⁵⁸) The *Sentinel*’s claim was that only 3000 greeted Carmichael as he denounced the war in Vietnam, and that elected officials Bill Green and Mervyn Dymally received a “cool reception.”¹⁵⁹ This was certainly the era of grand assemblies: Loren Miller recalled 7500 gathering at the Shrine Auditorium back then in the largest such gathering since the 1940s.¹⁶⁰

This was a prelude to a Black Power assembly in South L.A. with 100 groups present, including delegates from the BPP, CORE, SNCC, and Karenga’s forces—though it seemed that the potent descriptor “Black Power” was the magnet attracting them more than any preexisting common program.¹⁶¹

A few months later, Carmichael returned to the city of the stars, providing the keynote for what was portrayed as a “secretive ‘Black Survival’ [confab].” This gathering at Jefferson High School was “closed to whites,” and also featured James Bevel, John Floyd of an earlier iteration of the Black Panthers, and Cleaver interlocutor J. Herman Blake. Ken Msemaji, Karenga’s comrade, demanded that Euro-Americans “civilize your own country first—your Birchers [and] Minutemen.” The journalist present noted that “Similar hardline viewpoints were expressed by...[comedian/activist] Dick Gregory, Floyd McKissick [of CORE],” and SNCC cadre H. Rap Brown and Julian Bond, who objected to the FBI attempt

153. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 25 May 1967.

154. *People’s World*, 26 November 1966.

155. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 29 September 1966.

156. “The Flatlands,” 3-12 December 1966, Box 1, Ron Wilkins Papers.

157. *People’s World*, 3 December 1966.

158. “Taped Confidential Report,” 26 June 1966, Box 25, Record Group 233, Case Files, Wheeler Files, HUAC Records.

159. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 1 December 1966.

160. Davis and Wiener, *Set the Night on Fire*, 27.

161. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 23 February 1967.

to link their group to the CP. Some 1500 were present for a weekend of sessions that also involved elected officials such as Willie Brown of San Francisco and Mervyn Dymally of L.A.¹⁶²

Reportedly, "Black Maoists picketed" and "denounced the organizers," while Dymally cheekily "greeted the Black undercover agents in the crowd." There was "standing room only each day," and the charismatic Carmichael received a "standing ovation" because of his antiwar message. Karenga's men provided muscular security for this gathering.¹⁶³ Perhaps sensing where the ideological seedbed rested, Carmichael was becoming a fixture in the Southland. He appeared alongside Karenga and John Floyd and almost 500 others at the Masonic Hall—1050 East 50th Street—at the second anniversary of the martyrdom of Malcolm X.¹⁶⁴

By 1967 John Floyd of this earlier version of the Panthers was identified as a 24-year-old schoolteacher who had just "filed most of the necessary papers" for it to "become a formal political party. He said, according to a surveillant, "the party intended to give 'political identity' to the Negro,"¹⁶⁵ a process well underway.

It was well that they had put their heads together, for it was then that Secretary of Labor Willard Wirtz floated the questionable notion—read a headline—that "Watts jobless be moved to Seattle,"¹⁶⁶ as if they were little more than pawns on a capitalist chessboard.

Inflaming passions in South L.A. was the still startling case of Leonard Deadwyler, shot dead by an officer of the state in May 1966. His spouse was eight months pregnant and he was motoring to the nearest hospital with a white handkerchief unfurled on the car antenna, a common signal of emergency in his native Georgia. However, he was said to be speeding—necessarily—and was detained by a cop who shot him dead. The NAACP notified Mayor Yorty of the "numerous complaints and threats of violence [directed toward] police officers received by the NAACP regarding the police killing of 25 year old [Deadwyler]."¹⁶⁷ Possibly the only positive aspect of this dreadful scenario was the uncommonly adroit advocacy provided by a young attorney, Johnnie Cochran, who went on to defend both BPP cadre, Elmer "Geronimo" Pratt (Geronimo ji Jaga), and footballer O.J. Simpson.¹⁶⁸ Like the latter trial, the inquest was broadcast on television, creating a gripping drama.¹⁶⁹ The city was simmering.

162. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 1 June 1967.

163. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 2 June 1967.

164. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 24 February 1967.

165. *San Francisco Examiner/Chronicle*, 18 June 1967 and Report, ca. 1967, Box 69, 93-04-12, D4178 P3, Bay Area Reports, CUAC Records.

166. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 16 February 1967.

167. Letter to Mayor Yorty, May 1966, Carton 1, NAACP Papers-UCB.

168. Johnnie Cochran with David Fisher, *A Lawyer's Life*, New York: St. Martin's, 2003.

169. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 9 June 1966.

Cops and the community clashed in May as news about Deadwyler emerged. It was the second time in less than 24 hours that a mob had stoned the men in blue in that vicinity.¹⁷⁰ Then hundreds marched on the notorious 77th Precinct station, the heart of darkness for Black L.A.¹⁷¹ Ominous for the authorities was the question posed: Why were Negro cops receiving so much verbal and physical abuse from other Negro citizens?¹⁷²

Not positive was what befell Barbara Deadwyler: She endured a nervous breakdown at the tender age of 26 and could not care for herself or her children.¹⁷³ The newly minted "Communist Party-Marxist Leninist" demanded that "reactionary violence must be met by revolutionary violence."¹⁷⁴

In sum, Carmichael had arrived in the City of Angels at a noticeably distressful moment. A Nation of Islam believer had just been indicted for shooting a now disenchanted member, Samuel Harris, 21.¹⁷⁵ Then an alleged believer, Marpheal Kelly, 41—otherwise known as "Malcolm X Kelly"—was charged with wounding a cop with a shotgun blast, heightening tensions in the city.¹⁷⁶ Then a Black mob pelted police in the wake of another shooting, this of a 21-year-old young man.¹⁷⁷

Then at Normandie and Santa Barbara, in a replay of August 1965, cops routed an assemblage of 400 Black youth, mostly disgruntled juveniles out after midnight.¹⁷⁸

Predictably, increased activism meant increased surveillance. An early target was the Community Alert Patrol, designed to police the police. Prying eyes were present when 40 assembled at their meeting in March 1967, including five Euro-Americans. Notable attention was devoted to a man referred to as "Hakim Abdullah Jamal," also known as "Allen Eugene Donaldson," said to be a protégé of the sainted Malcolm X and thus mandating respect. Their detailed report suggested that at this gathering were "advocates" of "Mau Mau type organizations for violence, sabotage," a reference to the liberation struggle successfully concluded in Kenya, East Africa, by 1963. Ron Wilkins was said to be the CAP leader, and this group was depicted as being a balkanized version of a wider organization, and "more militant," having more cars to monitor the cops. Supposedly, instructions were to obtain more weapons to be obtained by various means from pawnshops. In other words, they were portrayed as the mirror image

170. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 12 May 1966.

171. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 19 May 1966.

172. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 12 May 1966.

173. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, October 1967.

174. Statement, ca. 1966, Carton 13, NAACP Papers-UCB.

175. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 1 September 1966.

176. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 1 September and 8 September 1966.

177. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 10 November 1966.

178. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 6 April 1967.

of the BPP of Oakland.¹⁷⁹ Remarkably, the news emerged that nonetheless they were slated for a \$200,000 grant from the federal Department of Health, Education and Welfare.¹⁸⁰ More sobering, by late July 1967 the *Los Angeles Sentinel* stated that the CAP head was “freed on dope charge,” speaking of “Field Commander...Ron...(Brother Crook) Wilkins” and his “companion Lamonte W. De Windt,” who “left the scene of a burning automobile.”¹⁸¹ Then the reputed chairman of CAP was forced to resign, said a press account, because of his tie to H. Rap Brown.¹⁸²

Whatever the case, the everlasting impact of CAP was confirmed when Huey Newton said that he read of their activism in August 1966—and was inspired to form the BPP.¹⁸³

Inescapably, this overall dissidence took on a political character. During this same tempestuous time Norman Richmond, 20, of 1920 West 95th Street, objected strenuously to being conscripted to fight in Vietnam.¹⁸⁴ Why? He maintained that he was not a U.S. citizen¹⁸⁵ but a colonial subject, then fled to sanctuary in Toronto (where I met him years later and collaborated with him on a series of radio broadcasts, still continuing, many of which can be found online). Richmond’s contentious claim was termed “pure bunk” by a skeptical judge,¹⁸⁶ hastening his exile. The FBI monitored Richmond and made sure that “copies of this memorandum are being furnished to Region II, 115th Military Intelligence Unit, United States Army, Pasadena; to Office of Special Investigation, Norton Air Force Base, San Bernardino; to Naval Investigative Service, San Diego; to the United States Attorney, Los Angeles; and the United States Secret Service.”¹⁸⁷

Richmond was an example of a spreading trait which bid fair to compromise U.S. imperialism itself: anti-draft resistance in the midst of a protracted war in Vietnam. By 1967 Joe Morrow of the “Black Anti-Draft Union” was raising a thunderous alarm since “the people of the Black community have again been attacked. Five members of the [BADU] including my good friend Vera Greenwood and her daughter were arrested,” and in an increasingly popular *démarche* it was demanded that “the white community show solidarity with the Black people and their struggle.” Thus, at Manual Arts High School, in the heart of the conflict in August 1965, when 250 rallied, “L.A. police were out in full force.” Greenwood, a mother of three and an elementary school teacher, “spoke of her concern for Black youth who must go fight for a ‘freedom ’that doesn’t

179. Report, 19 March 1967, Case Files, Box 25, Record Group 233, Wheeler Files, HUAC Records.

180. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 1 June 1967.

181. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 20 July 1967.

182. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 24 August 1967.

183. Davis and Wiener, *Set the Night on Fire*, 287.

184. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 13 October 1966.

185. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 24 November 1966.

186. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 26 November 1967.

187. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 9 February 1967, in 100-66078 (CIRM), FBI-Washington, D.C.

exist for them," a repetitive refrain. Her son would be draft age soon, and her daughter Debra, then 15, was a student at Manual Arts feeling the strain of spreading tension in the streets. Present at the monitored rally were Cornell Henderson, organizer for CORE in South L.A. and James Johnson, president of the Black Student Union at L.A. Community College, a fountainhead of revolt.¹⁸⁸ The Black Anti-Draft Union in L.A. seemed to be growing, registering 15 volunteers by mid-1967.¹⁸⁹

Ronald Reagan had defeated former National Lawyers Guild member "Pat" Brown in the 1966 gubernatorial race on a platform that pledged to deal severely with the culture of protest developing not only as a result of August 1965 but also Berkeley 1964. And then in 1967 San Diego students were raising a ruckus, including a youthful graduate student named Angela Davis who was arrested for "disturbing the peace" and "disobeying a police officer." This occurred in the midst of raucous demonstrations at a draft board: "She came into the police station and created a scene," it was said, then "entered the Registrar's office" at the La Jolla campus "and occupied it with other Black Panthers."¹⁹⁰ This scrap also made its way into the files of the House Un-American Activities Committee with the footnote that there was "detention only no arrest."¹⁹¹

In the midst of this turmoil and following the urban rebellions in Newark and Detroit, in some ways more expansive than August 1965 in L.A., the CP—anticipating inferentially the campaign to free Angela Davis—confronted what was unwinding in the streets, while continuing the internal debate personified by Jackson v. the late Briggs. Stepping forward was the Black stevedore Roscoe Proctor. "What is our attitude to the question of organized armed uprisings in the ghetto?" he asked. "Oppressed people have the right to forcibly overthrow an oppressive regime when the channels for democratic change are closed," a throwback to the rationale put forward during the Smith Act trials. He did not reject the "new emphasis that is being placed upon the armed struggle" since it was a response to the "growing lack of confidence of the Black people in this country," including a "growing lack of confidence in the white working class," with whom they shared a presumed trench. Yet there was a problem that has yet to disappear: "a lack of class consciousness and revolutionary tactics among the leadership of the Black movement." (Even now, as one listens to contemporary interviews of Black Power advocates reflecting on the past, they continue to display a distressing dearth of understanding of the wider and global forces that propelled their activism, as if their deciding to shout "Black Power" were

188. "Freedom Center Ephemera," 11 October 1967, CSU-Fullerton.

189. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 29 June 1967.

190. Minutes of Regents' Meeting, 19 September 1969, Box 6060, Governor's Papers, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, Simi Valley, Calif. (abbrev. Governor's Papers-RRPL).

191. Report, 5 October 1967, Angela Davis, INS #5 Box 134, 9E3, 3-17-5, Record Group 233, HUAC Records.

sufficiently intimidating to the ruling class that concessions began to flow inevitably, as if the crowing of the rooster delivered the rising sun.)

The burly, bespectacled Proctor derided "conspiratorial, terroristic actions," descriptors some comrade applied to the San Rafael episode of August 1970, complicating the defense of Angela Davis. He rejected "reckless, adventurous" tactics but, he cautioned, the "seizure of political power" is different, mandating elasticity in composing tactics: that is, when "serious armed insurrection" was not only permissible but virtually mandatory. "And if it is not for *this* purpose," he insisted emphatically, "then armed insurrection should not be initiated." He sought to thread the needle: "reject today," not necessarily tomorrow," the organizing of armed uprisings," but embrace "self-defense which we support including armed self-defense if necessary." In short, the balance of forces did not appear to be conducive to an "organizing of armed uprisings."¹⁹² Where was the global support? Where was the rear base? (Some Black comrades were busily burning bridges to Cuba, and already had turned with a vengeance on Havana's ally in Moscow, making comrades globally suspect that U.S. Negroes perpetually found a way to comport with Washington.) Again, it appeared that some of the Black Power comrades had come to believe it was sufficient for the force of their subjectivity to compel a change in objective conditions toward the goal of revolution or at least resolute self-determination. It was the pithy H. Rap Brown, SNCC principal, who told an alternative press organ in L.A. that "Whites can help by arming us."¹⁹³

This subtle jabbing at the BPP was not the only evidence of ideological flux. James Forman, one of the most sophisticated thinkers then in the spotlight, distinguished between "Revolutionary Black Power" and a "reactionary" and "conservative" version. Speaking in L.A., it was thought that he was jabbing at the forces concretized by the then proliferating forces of Ron Karenga. Forman included learned references to the Guyanese intellectual Walter Rodney (in 1980, as an attorney and journalist, I traveled to Georgetown for his trial, departing just before his assassination). Like Proctor, he warned against opening the door to infiltration via adventurism, as in the so-named "Statue of Liberty" case where the idea was to bomb this symbol, at the behest of an undercover agent, Raymond Wood, believed to be a militant. Knowingly, he added, "There are enough FBI and CIA agents even in this room."¹⁹⁴ Forman may have been alluding to recent stories involving 16 being jailed for a plot, according to press reports, to slay Roy Wilkins

192. Report on National Conference on Negro Affairs, 15 October 1967, Box 67A, Dorothy Healy Papers, CSU Long Beach. See also "Conference on Strategy and Tactics in the New Stage of Struggle for Negro Liberation," 15 October 1967, Box 153, CPUSA Records-NYU.

193. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 18 August 1967.

194. Speech by James Forman, 23 November 1967, Box 153, CPUSA Records-NYU. Cf. "Black America," Fall 1964, published by Revolutionary Action Movement, Introduction by Max Stanford, Box 1, Ron Wilkins Papers. See also Max Stanford, *We Will Return in the Whirlwind: Black Radical Organizations, 1960-1975*, Chicago: Kerr, 2007.

allegedly at the behest of the Revolutionary Action Movement, and their also reputedly targeting Dr. King, Carmichael and Julian Bond of SNCC.¹⁹⁵ Unsurprisingly, when Bond appeared in the Southland he was flanked by "bodyguards" with "two rifles," said an observer, though somehow they appeared to fail in delivering him to the Watts Happening Coffeehouse, the new watering hole for those in the know.¹⁹⁶

In 1967 the well-informed Forman—for a brief time a BPP principal, effectively Minister of Foreign Affairs—spoke of that year as the "high tide of Black Resistance." Unlike so many others, he spoke of the malignant influence of the Red Scare, especially upon the NAACP and liberation movements in Africa. His own SNCC was red-baited relentlessly and not without impact. Yet it was Forman who underlined the importance of revolutionary Cuba and offered tribute to the CP-tied Du Bois Clubs. He praised Fidel Castro and his insight that the "revolutionary movement in the United States will arise from this Negro sector because it is the most brutally treated," thus they are the "revolutionary guard" arising ineluctably from the "most mistreated." With premature perspicacity he referred to those like himself as "Overseas Africans," connecting Africa's fate to Black people in his homeland. Hence, at a recent U.N. confab in Zambia, Howard Moore—future counsel to Angela Davis, then "the law officer of SNCC"—and Forman "participated actively." He underscored the words of his fellow SNCC chief, H. Rap Brown, who said challengingly, "Prepare...physically and psychologically for the day when we may have to form a Black International and return to Southern Africa to help liberate our Motherland." He even had the foresight to position SNCC as being pro-Palestinian, still a difficult stance to adopt in the 21st century. He spoke of the "travels" of SNCC delegates Julius Lester and Charlie Cobb to Vietnam and the "internationalization of Black Consciousness." To that end 800 Black students from 11 Western states had just met in L.A., and it was there, it was said, that "Black athletes decided to boycott the 1968 Olympic games," which would rock the nation.¹⁹⁷

Forman was well aware of what had occurred in L.A. on 23 November 1967: With Harry Edwards, the 6'8" Black scholar serving as chairman, it was decided to shun the Mexico City Olympics. Echoing Forman but actually responding to the militancy of the era, the resolution proclaimed bitingly that the U.S. "has hypocritically put itself up as the leader of the Free World while right here in this country we have 22 million Black people catching more hell than anyone in any Communist country ever dreamed of"—touching a real sore point. Those assembled "unanimously voted" to boycott.¹⁹⁸ But it was not just engaged Black

195. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 22 June 1967.

196. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 17 March 1967.

197. Remarks by James Forman, 1967, Box 1, Ron Wilkins Papers.

198. "Resolution Drafted at Black Youth Conference, Los Angeles," 23 November 1967, Box 5, Harry Edwards Papers.

athletes who were backing this transformative campaign. Prof. Edwards was told that the "Grateful Dead, the famed rock group...might be able to do a benefit for the Boycott Fund. It could raise \$5000 or more."¹⁹⁹

Prof. Edwards, then of San Jose State University, was in tune with the times. After a sniper attack on housing project police at Hunters Point, that rare Black neighborhood in San Francisco, Edwards, the voice of doom, advised that this was a "warning of guerrilla warfare" that was "rapidly approaching."²⁰⁰ In the wake of the assassination of Dr. King in April 1968 he proclaimed that non-violence was dead—and he was seeking BPP membership.²⁰¹

199. Letter from Al Stump, 17 December 1967, Box 5, Harry Edwards Papers.

200. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 16 November 1967, Reel 27, Black Panther Documents.

201. *San Jose Mercury News*, 12 April 1968, Reel 27, Black Panther Documents.

Chapter 10

Raiding Armories for Armed Struggle, 1967-1968

By 1968 the NAACP was fighting a multi-front war, a state of belligerence that often ends in tears. Anticommunism remained their mother's milk, amply bulwarked by their long-term decision to cut a deal with the U.S. ruling class in return for anti-Jim Crow concessions. As noted, the price of the ticket—throwing the likes of Robeson overboard—made it difficult to adapt to changing global conditions, which they were now sworn to ignore. In the resultant vacuum arose the Nation of Islam and varieties of Black Nationalism—dubbed by their executive, Roy Wilkins as “reverse Hitler.” They were also not fond of Dr. King, notably after he wrong-footed them by vocalizing an anti-war agenda, which the NAACP felt was violative of their Cold War bargain—accurate, but he was under no obligation to conform. In sum, this largest and oldest of anti-Jim Crow groups had painted itself into a corner with no simple exit.

The Black Panther Party had gotten off to a roaring start in light of the armed propaganda displayed in Sacramento in May 1967. Black youth flocked to their banner, and membership skyrocketed. But with founders Newton and Seale often enmeshed in draining court cases, leadership often devolved to the erratic Cleaver, politically and psychologically not up to the burden of providing direction, especially when there was a lack of clarity on the bedrock matter of armed struggle. Again, there was enthrallment with what had occurred in Cuba and what was going on in Angola, Mozambique and elsewhere in Africa, translating into over-determining armaments rather than a close analysis of the balance of forces in a regime still bearing the earmarks of settler colonialism and the class collaboration that inhered therein. The CP sought to provide clarity when Roscoe Proctor reminded that armed struggle was a sensitive weapon to be deployed if democratic channels were blocked (difficult to argue in light of the passage of the Voting Rights Act and the global currents that propelled such progress), and/or the “seizure of power” was at issue (it did not appear so insofar as it did not seem that the masses or the working class were unable to live in the old way, and nor did it seem that the ruling class was unable to rule in the old way). As Cleaver's example was to show, all-important relations with the rear base in Cuba or its ally, the Soviet Union, were uneven at best. There was a kind of voluntarism among the

BPP comrades, as if they believed that the energy of their own subjectivity could overcome the parlous objective conditions, a lesson some had drawn from the Cuban Revolution, embedded in the so-called "foco theory."¹ Somehow occluded was the unavoidable reality that neither armed struggle in Southern Africa nor the survival of the Cuban Revolution in its infancy would have occurred but for the ample aid from Moscow and the socialist camp.

According to BPP founder Huey P. Newton, "in contrast to Marxist Leninist orthodox theories where the party controls the military," as he saw things, "the guerrilla...is also the military commander as well as the political theoretician," citing among others Régis Debray,² the French theoretician who subsequently moved steadily to the right. Part of the problem is that the perceived ideological weaknesses of the CP in terms of being unable to detect settler colonialism in its nakedness and obviousness created a vacuum filled by eclecticism of various sorts.

Yet the BPP was born in the Golden State, which as preceding chapters have suggested, contained a noteworthy CP. Chief of Staff David Hilliard recalled that when he was "growing up" in Oakland, he was witness to "Communist Party members openly recruit[ing]," meaning that when Newton was involved in a murderous confrontation with cops there, it did not seem extraordinary for Black Communist William Patterson—born in San Francisco—to provide guidance.³ When Newton ran afoul of the law then, Attorney Charles Garry, firmly within the orbit of the CP, took the case, "through the urging of my friend Dr. Carleton Goodlett," that rare NAACP leader who did not shun Patterson nor Robeson nor Du Bois.⁴ "One way the Communist Party can insinuate itself into the Black Power Movement," said a miffed surveillant, "is to supply attorneys."⁵ According to his fellow San Franciscan, the left-wing attorney Vincent Hallinan assayed that Garry's performance in the Newton case was "magnificent...you did a wonderful job!"⁶ This high praise was echoed by other left-wing lawyers such as Samuel Rosenwein,⁷ the Hollywood comic actor Godfrey Cambridge⁸ and especially

1. Régis Debray, *Revolution in the Revolution? Armed Struggle and Political Struggle in Latin America*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1967. See also K.S. Karol, *Guerrillas in Power: The Course of the Cuban Revolution*, New York: Hill & Wang, 1970.

2. "Huey Newton Talks to the Movement About the Black Panther Party...," August 1968, Box 67A, Dorothy Healey Papers, CSU-Long Beach.

3. Hilliard and Cole, *This Side of Glory*, 68, 145.

4. Garry and Goldberg, *Streetfighter*, 97.

5. *San Francisco Examiner*, 19 March 1968, and Report, ca. 1968, Box 69, 93-04-12, D4178 P3, Bay Area Reports, CUAC Records.

6. Vincent Hallinan to Charles Garry, 10 September 1968, Reel 35, Black Panther Documents.

7. Samuel Rosenwein to "Dear Charlie [Garry]," 10 September 1968, Reel 35, Black Panther Documents. "Tremendous job...obtained a result which few lawyers could have achieved."

8. Godfrey Cambridge to "Dear Charles [Garry]," 12 September 1968, Reel 35, Black Panther Documents. "Straight ahead! Keep up the good work...Dear Brother Huey...we've never met" to "stay strong."

Black Communist attorney William L. Patterson. The now elderly activist thought that Garry had done a "splendid job," as he expressed "deep satisfaction with your acceptance of the case." For the prosecution was designed to "create an image of Blacks as terrorists." He "spoke" with Panthers since he was "out west during the formative period of the Newton Defense."⁹ For his part, Garry said his client was "touched by the warm and flattering letter.... I showed it to Huey and he was indeed touched," for "with men of courage like yourself to look to, it makes our task much easier."¹⁰

Still, there seemed to be a felt need by BPP leaders to distance themselves, ideologically and otherwise, from the CP, which was comprehensible since if they did not, the question might arise: why not form a wider version of the Che-Lumumba Club?

BPP principals seemed eager to revise what they thought were the inadequacies of "orthodox" Communist parties. Speaking "On the Ideology of the Black Panther Party," Cleaver was keen to point out that "Marxism has never really dealt with the United States of America" (demonstrably inaccurate though—as noted—one could critique how they dealt with this complex organism) and, besides, there was "much evidence that Marx and Engels were themselves racists" (here he could have provided a contribution if he had discussed their response to the epochal Haitian Revolution). Yet, he insisted, "We are Marxist-Leninists." But instead of the urban proletariat as the locomotive of history, Cleaver posited the ill-defined "Black Urban Lumpen Proletariat," which seemed to be conflated with the analytically distinct "Industrial Reserve Army." Even a stopped clock is correct twice a day, and there was something to his point that there was a palpable "difference between the problems of the Mother Country Working Class and the Working Class from the Black Colony." In any case, the ascendancy of China and North Korea meant "something new."¹¹

Unlike other BPP leaders—Newton, Seale, Hilliard, et al.—Cleaver had roots in Los Angeles. Thus, when he contested comedian/activist Dick Gregory for the presidential nod of the Peace and Freedom Party, the Angeleno prevailed; as one analyst put it, "Cleaver won in Los Angeles with 626 votes, he received a considerably smaller margin than in the north," thus triumphing overall with 62% to his opponent's 31%,¹² not least because of his base in the more populous south. Cleaver, whose book *Soul on Ice* was a defining text of the era, was already renowned, particularly because it sold two million copies within the first few years of publication.¹³ There seemed to be a symbiotic relationship between the

⁹⁹ William L. Patterson to Charles Garry, 22 July 1968, Reel 35, Black Panther Documents.

¹¹⁰ Garry to Patterson, ca. July 1968, Reel 35, Black Panther Documents.

¹¹¹ Eldridge Cleaver, "On the Ideology of the Black Panther Party," unclear date, Box 1, Ron Wilkins Papers.

¹¹² "Peace & Freedom News," 12 August 1968, Box 1, Ron Wilkins Papers.

¹¹³ Gifford, *Revolution or Death*, 153.

erstwhile inmate and Gov. Reagan: As the latter attacked the former, his book sales boomed, and as the former attacked the latter, his poll ratings leapt.¹⁴

Reginald Major, one of the first analysts of the BPP, observed that Cleaver was the "common link to all Panthers. He embraced the theory, practice, vanguardism, humor, irreverence and the necessity for Black survival in one package, his life." He was living up to his prison dream of becoming the logical successor to the martyred Malcolm. Yet his time in the spotlight at home was brief: paroled in December 1966 and exiled by late 1968, with two of those months, between 6 April and 12 June, in jail. It was Cleaver who sculpted the androcentric notions that characterized the BPP: "We shall gain our manhood...or else the world will be leveled in our attempt to do so." It was Cleaver who bestrode the world stage at the United Nations on 25 June 1968. It was Cleaver who ran for president of the United States.¹⁵

When the analyst Malcolm Harris said admiringly of the BPP that "Pound [for] pound, no American political group had nearly as big an impact during the period,"¹⁶ he could have reduced this apt aphorism to Cleaver's magnetism, for his party's numbers were comparatively meager. "We never had more than three or four thousand members," Cleaver recalled and, per Major, they "absorbed much of the Black Muslim vocabulary, particularly the idea of the Beast," transmogrified into the sub-category of "pig" to identify cops. But this was married to the fact that "in prison," said Cleaver, "I spent many hours working through the heavy writings of Marx and Engels" combined with "my own personal fascination with Joseph Stalin." He kept a picture of the Georgian on his office wall. Then there was the raw audacity not necessarily stemming from Muslims or Marx. BPP "leadership wanted a private plane assault on all the prisons of California, with our people landing within the walls and freeing everyone inside." Moreover, "revolutionaries from Mexico had come up to talk with me and urged a commando attack against the [1968 Olympic] Games." This was not so implausible as it appeared at first blush since there was a "steady flow of military equipment and pilfered supplies" in "our armory" for "military depots and National Guard armories leaked like a sieve"; plus, "armories were sold to us." The BPP had a "scattering of guerrilla forces" with "significant clusters hidden in the mountains."¹⁷

This was a time when Cleaver was unbound, unleashed. He attracted the negative attention of Max Rafferty, an official to Reagan's right, pointing out that at a Sacramento campus he called for the "overthrow" of the U.S. government with officialdom "dragged out by the scruffs of their necks and thrown into the

14. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 26 September 1968.

15. Major, *A Panther*, 143, 281.

16. Harris, *Palo Alto*, 223, 329.

17. Remarks by Cleaver, unclear date, Carton 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB. See also Major, *A Panther*, 255: Cleaver's San Francisco residence featured a "likeness of Stalin," displayed prominently.

gutter." Contrary to the hegemonic political line, Cleaver was said to "have extolled the teaching of Karl Marx," all peppered with "unspeakable obscenities."¹⁸ It was not unusual for the hirsute Cleaver to speak before thousands at various campuses.¹⁹ He was not alone in his audacity. Near the same time fellow BPP leader George Murray, instructor at San Francisco State University, urged students to "bring guns" to demand more Blacks be admitted as students.²⁰ (It was Murray who mouthed a then popular BPP slogan: "Political power comes from the barrel of a gun."²¹) Days earlier Cleaver had primed the pump when he addressed 2500 cheering students on campus.²² SFSU was aflame: Even the writer whom Cleaver emulated—then named Le Roi Jones, making his way from his native Newark to the campus—addressed hundreds conveying a stark message wherein he reputedly "urged Black people to arm themselves for a confrontation with the hated whites...you'd better get yourself a gun if you want to survive the white man's wrath."²³

By December 1967 the campus was in turmoil and recovering from angst, Beverly Axelrod was counseling the protesters. Again, a convenient scapegoat was uncovered: "Just as [in] Berkeley," said a mainstream periodical, "there is a long history of Communist and other radical agitation at this campus."²⁴ Yet it is not evident that Danny Glover, future Hollywood star but then a 21-year-old student, or future leader of stevedores Clarence Thomas, then 20, was influenced by the CP when they were accused of thrashing a student editor in the midst of the unrest.²⁵

Authorities were panicking, but Carl Braden of Louisville, Ky., did not comfort them, informing them brusquely that "You asked for it in California," a veiled reference to out-of-control police terror, virtually barring Negroes from campuses and the like. Unimpressed, the *Oakland Tribune* dismissed his words since supposedly he was "part of" the CP,²⁶ the comfortably convenient dodge of the times.

Murray was echoing paramount leader Newton, who in 1968 reputedly required that each member "should own a shotgun, a .357 Magnum and a .38 pistol." A frantic Gov. Reagan was cited for the chilling proposition that "if

18. Max Rafferty to City, County and District Superintendents, 4 October 1968, Box 2, Darman Commons Papers, CSU-Dominguez Hills.

19. *Sacramento Bee*, 10 October 1968.

20. *Los Angeles Times*, 30 October 1968.

21. Harris, *Palo Alto*, 333.

22. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 10 October 1968, Reel 28, Black Panther Documents.

23. Report, 4 May 1967, Box 69, 93-04-12, D4178 P3, Bay Area Reports, CUAC Records.

24. *San Francisco Examiner*, 6 December 1967, and *San Francisco Chronicle*, 7 December 1967, Box 69, 93-04-12, D4178, P3, Bay Area Reports, CUAC Records.

25. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 29 March 1968.

26. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 4 May 1967, and *Oakland Tribune*, 5 May 1967, Box 69, 93-04-12 D4178 P3, Bay Area Reports, CUAC Records.

Eldridge Cleaver is allowed to teach our children, they may come home one night and slit our throats."²⁷

As the rift between China and the USSR and its allies became obvious, the BPP, influenced deeply by the Black Nationalist component of their ideological arsenal, tended to see—evidence to the contrary—a gang-up by Moscow and Washington on Beijing. This could only complicate their already weakening relationship with Cuba. Once more, the CP's paeans of praise to slaveholding founders, such as Jefferson, made it problematic for militant Black youth to accept its more sage counsel. Still, when Angela Davis joined their ranks, then allied with political prisoner George Jackson, and then went on trial, this proved to be advantageous for the CP, which benefited from its global network in organizing a worldwide campaign to rescue her from the gallows.

Yet in the midst of what seemed to be a transformative era for the CP after years in the wilderness, Soviet troops intervened in Czechoslovakia, igniting widespread upset, including a rebuke of the leadership by Bettina Aptheker and her then spouse Jack Kurzweil.²⁸ This view was to be echoed by Dorothy Healey, who had visited Prague in May 1967—a “changing point” in her career, she admitted—and spent considerable time with exiled Hollywood writer Paul Jarrico and his spouse Yvette, who had been a translator in the controversial trial of Rudolf Slansky and his comrades.²⁹ This event stirred the pot of anti-Jewish fervor—not altogether unlike the 1950s trial of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, the wars of Israel and the growth of anti-Zionism, etc.

On 23 August 1968 a crowd of 500 assembled in L.A. determined to discuss the “Prague Spring” and the Soviet intervention. Healey assailed Herbert Aptheker and Gus Hall, then head of the CP, for backing Moscow and, she said, “for the first time” there was a split in the Southern California district, despite numerous previous opportunities to do so, for instance in the Briggs-Jackson contretemps over Black Power. It was “almost a civil war,” she lamented. She in turn was savaged by Helen Winter, James Jackson, Franklin Alexander and other comrades.³⁰ Charlene Mitchell took advantage of a confluence by asserting that the conviction of Newton was worse than the Soviet intervention, which she termed “regrettable.”³¹

Months later, L.A. Reds again disavowed the Soviet intervention in Prague, albeit by a narrow margin, but after heated debates. Speaking were Charlene Mitchell, Gus Hall and Hyman Lumer. Yet the comrades were united in their embrace of the BPP, donating \$100 to their breakfast fund.³²

27. Gifford, *Revolution or Death*, 150, 169.

28. Bettina Aptheker to *Daily World*, 6 August 1968, Box 38, Bettina Aptheker Papers.

29. Dorothy Healey, Oral History.

30. Dorothy Healey, Oral History.

31. *San Jose Mercury*, 15 September 1968, Reel 28, Black Panther Documents.

32. *People's World*, 19 April 1969.

This was an aspect of their ongoing solidarity with the BPP, with Black leaders Mitchell and Claude Lightfoot denouncing the persecution of the Panthers and utilizing their still effective post-Comintern network, appealing for worldwide protests on their behalf.³³

Speaking for the BPP, Bobby Seale argued that the “Russians” were “using imperialistic tactics in Czechoslovakia.”³⁴ In the wider scheme of things, the CP split made it less likely that the BPP and other forces on the left would accept CP counsel: Why accept advice from the distressed and those riven with fissures?

This was a harbinger of underlying tensions in the ranks that reared dramatically in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. This controversy was a factor in explicating why Smith Act defendant Al Richmond left the CP; besides, as he explained, “among radicals of my generation,” BPP rhetoric induced “acute discomfort to outrage,” with talk of “open armed war in the streets.”³⁵ Richmond, like a disproportionate number of CP comrades, happened to be Jewish, and some amongst them were uncomfortable with the militant anti-Zionism of Black Power elements, even that imbedded in SNCC’s outpost at 7406 Western in L.A.³⁶ (Abraham Feinberg wrote the BPP newspaper directly to complain about this tendency.³⁷) From mid-June 1969 to May 1970, the paper published 49 editions, 27 of which—according to one analysis—denounced Israel.³⁸

Stokely Carmichael, who at several points had ties to both SNCC and the BPP, was unequivocal in backing the Palestinians versus Israel.³⁹ The BPP organ reprinted a Chinese statement castigating Israel as a result of the “Six Day War.”⁴⁰ The 1967 war involving, *inter alia*, Israel and Egypt, also engendered schisms and rifts in the CP—which, as noted, had a substantial Jewish membership—fissures that were celebrated by their detractors,⁴¹ despite the real potential to ignite interracial conflict. Richmond’s view was not singular within the CP, causing unease about the Angela Davis case and what it was thought to portend.

According to Cleaver, at one point Seale and Newton were “planning a gigantic bank robbery” to finance their political project and ideas like this were “discomfiting to some within the ambit of the ‘Old Left.’”⁴²

33. *People’s World*, 30 August 1969.

34. *The Black Panther*, 31 March 1969.

35. Richmond, *Long View*, 38.

36. Statement of SNCC-L.A. on Anti-Zionism, 27 July 1968, Box 1, Ron Wilkins Papers.

37. *The Black Panther*, 8 August 1969.

38. In G. Louis Heath, ed., *The Black Panther Leaders Speak: Huey Newton, Bobby Seale, Eldridge Cleaver and Company Speak Out Through the Black Panther Party’s Official Newspaper*, Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1976, 113.

39. *Newark [California] Argus*, 19 February 1968, Black Panther Documents.

40. *The Black Panther*, 20 July 1967.

41. See, e.g., *Daily Californian*, 7 July 1967, and Reports, 1967, Box 69, 93-04-12 D4178 P3, Bay Area Reports, CUAC Records.

42. Remarks, November 1968, in Scheer, *Eldridge Cleaver*, 156.

Still others were abashed by the sheer intensity of BPP language, infused albeit by the premises of the left and the fury of Black Nationalism. By January 1968 Kathleen Cleaver, billed as "Communications Secretary" of the BPP, opined that "Black people will never be liberated by supporting political parties that are controlled by their oppressors"; therefore she demanded "no more window dressing, no more trickery, no more treachery" perpetrated by a "long tradition of bootlickers, Uncle Toms and Black Anglo-Saxons" and, with a nod to pre-1959 Cuba, "Black Batistas."⁴³ She was a force to be reckoned with, purportedly the first woman to serve on the Central Committee, the directive body of the BPP.⁴⁴

During this period, the organized forces of Black Nationalism, personified by Karenga, had assets in their identification with a version of Africa which corresponded with the popular "Black is Beautiful" tendency: au naturel hair, sartorial diversification and the like. However, it did not aspire to be a mass organization—and nothing could prevent Karenga from serving a term in prison on disturbing charges involving maltreatment of Black women. Yet the continuing popularity of the holiday it initiated—Kwanzaa—suggests that it was a long-term beneficiary of the conflictual 1960s.

The Nation of Islam benefited from the fact that ostensibly, like the CP, it was part of an international formation, a tacit advantage in recruitment given what Proctor already had indicated: a decided lack of confidence in the intentions of fellow members of the U.S. working class, acknowledged by Proctor but not connected structurally to the diktat of settler colonialism and/or the construction of white supremacy for that matter. Few self-declared scientists of society pondered why universalist Islam gave rise to the Nation of Islam or why universal Socialism gave rise to Che-Lumumba. Thus, the attraction to Muslim ranks of Muhammad Ali was a real coup; and even the Islam of Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, though he clashed with them, likely benefited the Nation too.

A problem then, as now, is that there were not that many, organizationally or individually, who could engage in a 360-degree analysis of what had been called the "Negro Question," examining every nook and cranny, from the local to the global, often leaving a besieged community in not an ideal state: confusion.

* * *

As with the tsunami of funds flooding into the till of the NAACP in the aftermath of the lynching of Negro youth Emmett Till in Mississippi in 1955, followed by the efflorescence of Dr. King and Rosa Parks, this group continued

43. "Black Paper" from BPP "Ministry of Information," 31 January 1968, Box 5, Harry Edwards Papers.

44. Gifford, *Revolution or Death*, 144.

having a problem in maintaining a balance sheet. This was L.A., which also had the contributing factor of waves of funding from Hollywood, a path lubricated by the likes of Sammy Davis, Jr., Marlon Brando, Jane Fonda, and even former Communists such as Dalton Trumbo. Unsurprisingly, by the summer of 1968, NAACP Regional Director Leonard Carter lamented that the L.A. branch was not only behind in meeting tax assessments but also, "pilfering of NAACP funds has been going on" for a long time,⁴⁵ obviously compromising the fightback against police repression and related ills. Carter may have been part of the problem, involved in internal spats leaving him "shocked, hurt and deeply resentful."⁴⁶

NAACP problems did not just involve peculations of various sorts, though Clarence Smith of 3755 Welland Avenue was among those who harbored "deep concern about the deteriorating stature of the NAACP" in that "thousands of dollars are being squandered."⁴⁷ Though the Negro population was growing, Association membership was not. Roy Wilkins was displeased, pointing out the conspicuous: "Multiple branches in Los Angeles have not shown the growth and development which was expected" in light of ongoing population growth and resultant need to organize. In 1967 there were four branches in town and 2498 members, while by late 1968 membership was an anemic 2558; the hefty Black population of 883,861, one of the largest in the nation—or this side of Brazil or Nigeria for that matter—suggested that the Association should at least be able to recruit 5% of this community but instead had "less than 1%."⁴⁸ Certainly all manner of peculation was not helping things.

Matters deteriorated to the point that a special inquiry was launched. It was there that Ken Msemasi captured the consensus when he said that the branch and the group overall are "out of touch with the Black community," though another writer split the difference, speaking of an "Old Guard" competing with "Young Turks." Talented writer Louise Meriwether of the "Black Anti-Defamation League" weighed in, as did an unnamed youth who termed Wilkins "Number One Uncle Tom." Bitter recriminations ensued when Edward Warren recalled 1961, when Wilkins issued the ukase, "Have nothing to do with the Muslims, condemn them everywhere." Warren said his branch dissented, stating adamantly, "We will never obey that directive." Bail bondsman Celes King, a dissident, said his branch had sent \$8000 to headquarters with little accounting of this sum, calling the hawkish anticommunist chief a "lackey." King, a middle-class doyen and, presumably, of a sort for which the group was designed, observed, "I joined the branch in 1951" and "I have raised more money personally than any individual," an outgrowth of the reality that the "Central Los Angeles branch has more

⁴⁴⁵ Leonard Carter to Gloster Current, 26 August 1968, Part III, Box C6, NAACP Papers-LC.

⁴⁴⁶ Leonard Carter to Dr. Hudson, 27 October 1966, Carton 13, NAACP Papers-UCB.

⁴⁴⁷ Clarence Smith, et al. to Roy Wilkins, 26 September 1968, Part VI, Box C76, NAACP Papers-LC.

⁴⁴⁸ Roy Wilkins to Charles Thomas, West Side branch, 6 November 1968, Part VI, Box C76, NAACP Papers-LC.

members on a percentage basis than [the] NAACP does nationally. We have 1189 adult members," he contended, and "300 youth members...we have more youth members than all thirty branches in Southern California put together," a saddening commentary. "I have great respect for Roy. My mother, father and Roy have been friends from the time I was born," but there was something rotten at the top. Annette Bruce put her finger on something real when she asserted, "There are hundreds of Black people who have joined the NAACP to further their own cause," and especially "economic status."⁴⁹

As the "Negro Civil War" heated up, Eddie Atkinson told Celes King crisply, "Your attack" on Wilkins was "blasphemous...you are a superior bail bondsman, an inferior NAACP president."⁵⁰ An unsigned letter from reportedly "1000 people" assailed King with undiluted vitriol since his office on "Central Avenue" was adjacent to a "joint right next door" with "sporting men and women," a euphemism, "doing everything including selling dope. In his office Black Panthers, Red[s] and liquor heads are also there."⁵¹

A woman named "Mrs. Robert E.J. Hill" was of a different mind. "Conditions in the Beverly Hills-Hollywood NAACP," a fundraising titan, "are beginning to resemble a kind of 'Black Mafia'" with "fiery session[s]" generated by "crude methods" undergirded by "aggressive action" leading to a "Barnum and Bailey 'freak-out.'" This was a "national disgrace" aligned with "idiocy," leaving "positions to be prostituted" in gauche exchanges. This was a middle-class orgy⁵² of garishness, garnished with the then ascendant lumpen traits. Black folk were impacted by wider societal trends, among which included the proliferation of organized crime families. The local Black weekly carried a cartoon indicating that they were ethnocentric with the caption: "White gangsters practice Jim Crow...organized crime...white only," suggesting how their Black peers would be inclined to the mushrooming Black Nationalism.⁵³

Henry Dotson of 2620 South Western observed that "Concerned Clergymen" of L.A. "are deeply disturbed" in light of the "recent demand of Los Angeles leaders for the ouster of Roy Wilkins."⁵⁴ Dotson was not neutral. He joined Celes King and Charles Thomas in dubbing Wilkins an "Uncle Tom," his de facto nickname because of his failing to recognize the BPP and the declining membership in the face of a steadily growing Black population.⁵⁵ But with their manifold problems, Association fossil Dr. H. Claude Hudson was irked when his

49. Transcript of Special Hearing, 24 November 1968, Part VI, Box C76, NAACP Papers-LC.

50. Eddie Atkinson to Celes King, 13 November 1968, Part VI, Box C76, NAACP Papers-LC. In same box see also Monthly Report, 14 April 1966.

51. Unsigned and undated letter, Part IV, Box C3, NAACP Papers-LC.

52. Mrs. Robert E.J. Hill to Jesse Scott, Director, Region I, 26 June 1968, Part IV, Box C3, NAACP Papers-LC.. The same letter can be found in Carton 58, NAACP Papers-UCB.

53. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 2 November 1967.

54. Telegram from Henry Dotson, 12 November 1968, Part IV, Box C3, NAACP Papers-LC.

55. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 14 November 1968.

members at Manual Arts High School joined with what were called "Black Nationalist groups" who sought to oust the principal.⁵⁶

He was being garlanded in the press as being responsible for "developing" the "largest and most effective branch in the nation,"⁵⁷ but his internal critics were not of like mind. Per recent custom, Dr. Hudson was ignored as two days of violence ensued.⁵⁸ (The elderly dentist was then caught up in a classic internal NAACP power struggle.⁵⁹) The NAACP did not seem to grasp that they were in the midst of a new era, a new youth-driven movement that looked askance at their elders on the premise that they had failed to deliver. At Jefferson High School, it required a boycott in order to finally bring Black history courses there and throughout the city: Garfield, Roosevelt, Wilson, Venice, Belmont and Lincoln high schools all faced boycotts.⁶⁰

In March 1968 about 15,000 Chicano students walked out, launching what was then termed "the largest student strike in Los Angeles history."⁶¹ At Pomona High School, a similar protest erupted.⁶² Further east in Riverside, Dr. W. Edwin Gardner chose to run for a seat on the county school board, asserting that "Negroes are genetically inferior to whites... 'the abler Negroes are those with white blood,'" he said. "Africa produced practically nothing until the white man moved in and taught him what to do." Predictably, mass unrest ensued.⁶³ What was occurring was that the regional tradition of reaction, stretching back to genocide of the Indigenous, met a charged political climate driven by favorable global winds, including anti-colonialism, the exhaustion of the Red Scare model, and the unleashing of Black Militancy.

"Young Black Militants are assuming the leadership of the Civil Rights Movement," asserted Dymally in April 1968. "A year ago this was not the case!" but now "they are the people to watch," with Karenga being singled out.⁶⁴ But the balding, mustachioed, chubby intellectual was receiving incoming fire then because he and his comrades justified polygamy as a remedy for the purportedly "unstable" Black family. Still, when L.A. County majordomo Kenneth Hahn echoed Dymally and spoke of how "militant forces seem intent on trying to disrupt every university, college, and high school campus,"⁶⁵ pointedly he did not exclude the roly-poly man with the Fu Manchu mustache. The turbulent upheaval

56. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 12 October 1967.

57. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 28 November 1968.

58. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 23 November 1967.

59. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 21 November 1968.

60. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 14 March 1968.

61. Bettina Aptheker, *Communists in Closets*, 48.

62. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 22 February 1968.

63. Article, 2 June 1968, Box 3, Robert Chandler Collection on Student Activism, UC-Riverside (abbrev. Robert Chandler Collection).

64. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 25 April 1968.

65. Scot Brown, *Fighting for US*, 63, 77.

of the times was exposed in late 1968 when there was an attempt to revoke the charters of L.A. branches of the NAACP,⁶⁶ rendering the organization nugatory, politically bankrupt.

* * *

Part of the popularity of the BPP was due to their advocacy of armed self-defense, congruent with the thinking of the martyred Malcolm. This philosophy also was somewhat inconsistent with the approach of Dr. King, who was to perish at the hands of a gunman during this vital year of 1968. Just before then, George Jackson, who too was to die violently a few years later, informed his mother about this own evolving attitude: "I have grown very, very tired of talking and listening to talk. King and his kind have betrayed our bosom interests," said this BPP principal, "with their demagogic delirium. The poor fool knows nothing of the antagonist's true nature" since "in a nonviolent movement there must be a latent threat of eruption, a dormant possibility of sudden and violent action if concessions are to be won, respect gained and the establish[ed] order altered. That nonviolent theory is practicable in civilized lands among the civilized people, the Asians and Africans, but a look at European history shows that anything of great value that ever changed hands was taken by force of arms."⁶⁷

By 1968 Cleaver, with his charisma, his way with words, his imposing physicality and, to be fair, his being in sync with the rising tide of militancy, was firmly ensconced in the highest councils of the BPP. Cleaver had matured in a Los Angeles that was marked ineffably by the organized left, including forces that subscribed to the doctrines of Marx and had been repressed as a result. As he was gravitating toward the Nation of Islam, then Malcolm X, these same forces were in a forced retreat creating an opening for the birth of the BPP, just before he left prison—but leaving him marked by both Marx and Malcolm.

As a prisoner, he had floated the idea of what emerged in April of that pivotal year: U.N. membership for "Afro-America" and a "plebiscite" administered by this global body to determine the fate of this besieged minority.⁶⁸ According to Robert Allen, the left-wing Black analyst, the BPP chose to "assert [the] right to armed self defense" as part of an overall "strategy" culminating with "United Nations intervention" with this body's "observers stationed" in Black America as *de facto* peacekeepers.⁶⁹ Repeatedly, Cleaver demanded U.N. observers be posted

66. Transcript, 24 November 1968, Carton 46, NAACP Papers-UCB.

67. Letter to Mother, March 1967 in Jackson, *Soledad Brother*, 106.

68. Remarks, April-May 1968, in Scheer, *Eldridge Cleaver*, 69.

69. *National Guardian*, 6 January 1968, Reel 27, Black Panther Documents.

in Black America.⁷⁰ This was not far-fetched, but it would require extensive global diplomacy, along with strict coordination with Havana and Moscow.

By early 1968, Stokely Carmichael, who seemed to be closer to the BPP after his estrangement from SNCC, was informing avid listeners in Oakland and Los Angeles of his recent global tour to Vietnam, Cuba, Egypt, Algeria, Guinea-Conakry, Tanzania, Syria, Britain, Sweden and France.⁷¹ Speaking at a Cuban summit, the tall, lanky activist maintained stoutly, "We must internationalize our struggle,"⁷² and was complemented by the BPP's George Murray who proclaimed death to "imperialists" while visiting the island.⁷³ (There was also work to do at home, as indicated by a cartoon in the premier L.A. Black weekly that presented militant exile Robert F. Williams, then in Vietnam, as a puppet of Ho Chi Minh.⁷⁴)

What possibly led the authorities to conclude that Carmichael was a closet Communist were his journeys to countries ruled by Communists—or his global jaunts more generally. For preceding him to Southeast Asia, not on the beaten path for U.S. Negroes, especially after the sidelining of the internationalists like Robeson, were Ronnie Lucas and Hugh Fowler of the Du Bois Clubs, CP-affiliated, headed to a conference in Jakarta. This was not a propitious moment for, as Fowler related, "Unfortunately, while we had stopped for the night in Tokyo en route," violence exploded in Indonesia, as a U.S.-backed anticommunist coup succeeded which their presence in the archipelago could have compromised.⁷⁵

It was Carmichael who advised that African Americans must organize militarily.⁷⁶ Even when the authorities focused on "Trotskyites and the Muscovite Communists" and how they "showed active interests in Black Panthers," somehow it all came back to this Bronxite. "If he did not actually organize the Black Panther Party," it was said of this alumnus of Howard University, "there is little doubt...[that] he inspired it."⁷⁷

The U.S. authorities were forward leaning in response. BPP operatives David Hilliard, George Murray and Landon Williams provided a lurid tale: While buying tickets for a flight to Havana, they were kidnapped in Mexico City by Interpol, the ostensibly global agency, and shipped to New York City.⁷⁸ Similarly, Jamaica banned entry to Carmichael, James Forman and H. Rap Brown.⁷⁹

⁷⁰ *San Francisco Examiner*, 26 July 1968, Reel 27, Black Panther Documents.

⁷¹ *Oakland Tribune*, 16 February 1968, Reel 27, Black Panther Documents.

⁷² *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 10 August 1967.

⁷³ *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner*, 26 November 1968.

⁷⁴ *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 30 November 1967.

⁷⁵ "Spur," newsletter of Du Bois Clubs, October 1965, Volume 2, No. 1, Box 69, 93-04-12, D4178 P3, Bay Area Reports, CUAC Records.

⁷⁶ *Newark [California] Argus*, 19 February 1968, Reel 27, Black Panther Documents.

⁷⁷ *San Francisco Examiner & Chronicle*, 30 April 1967, Box 69, 93-04-12 D4718 P3, Bay Area Reports, CUAC Records.

⁷⁸ *San Leandro Morning News*, 15 August 1968, Reel 27, Black Panther Documents.

⁷⁹ *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 26 October 1967.

Kingston may have gotten wind of Brown's words while addressing Karenga's forces, where he gave a pungent analysis of the Revolutionary Action Movement as "mostly a rifle club really more than it is a political organization." The then budding writer Quincy Troupe reported nonetheless that "the Black people of Watts welcomed Brown with open arms" as "between 3000 and 3500 persons, all but a dozen of them Black, turned out" to embrace him. He seemed to outshine those with whom he shared a platform, including Karenga—the sponsor of this event—and even Huey P. Newton, who espoused the salient message, "We must join the international struggle."⁸⁰

Those paying close attention would have been able to sense that Carmichael—trips to Cuba and Vietnam aside—was en route to articulating a stinging critique of the ideology of the CP and BPP. Speaking in Oakland in February 1968, the tall and often inspiring leader roared that "Communism and Socialism [are] not an ideology suited to Black people, period." Along with his close comrade, H. Rap Brown, "electoral action" too was disparaged.⁸¹ Marx himself, said Carmichael, was little more than a "honkie," an intended insult.⁸²

The ideological well had been poisoned, insofar as the FBI planted documents asserting that Carmichael was an "informer for the CIA," causing the Marxist-oriented BPP to send a "hit team" for his scalp—according to an implicated FBI operative—causing (it was said) the Black Power maven to depart for exile in Africa.⁸³ The BPP took his alleged heresy quite seriously for, as L.A. Panther Wayne Pharr put it, "We studied the teachings of both Mao and Marx extensively in PE [Political Education] classes." Ironically, at once the BPP styled themselves as revolutionaries while hailing the lumpen—though Pharr thought their antagonists, grouped with Karenga, "came off like gangsters."⁸⁴

As the prime articulator of Black Power, Carmichael could hardly be ignored, especially since he was just responding to extant trends. Thus, at a BPP rally a Euro-American objected to being "seated in an all white section—behind an all white section," but the Black Communist Ronald Stevenson objected to her objection.⁸⁵ Radicals of whatever stripe were seeking to respond to a complex political calculus whereby many Blacks utterly lacked confidence in their Euro-American counterparts to the point where they sought distance from them at every opportunity, a state of affairs shaped inexorably by centuries of white supremacy and class collaboration.

Actually, some of these ill-considered remarks by Carmichael may have been motivated by his ill-fated relations with the BPP. For a while, he and his SNCC

80. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 18-24 August 1967.

81. *People's World*, 24 February 1968.

82. *People's World*, 4 May 1968.

83. Swearingen, *FBI Secrets*, 82.

84. Pharr, *Nine Lives*, 109.

85. *People's World*, 9 March 1968.

comrades, including the wise Forman, had accepted top posts in the BPP, but this promising relationship rapidly deteriorated. According to Cleaver, this olive branch to Forman and Carmichael did not go down well, inducing "sabotage" and causing the latter to "unite" with "Ron Karenga," not the intended result.⁸⁶

Exhibiting their lumpen—arguably and more precisely, gangster—proclivities, the press reported a questionable, likely apocryphal story telling a chilling story of how once a Panther put a pistol in Forman's mouth: "He squeezed the trigger three times" but fortunately "it was unloaded." Forman was said to have immediately called Cleaver and his spouse, refuting this story, the latter "whom I know very well." Charitably, he ascribed this episode in part to how the "federal government had decided to escalate the conflict between SNCC and the Panthers." Moreover, this was in the context of a confused time when there were various Panther formations, including the victors—Newton/Seale/Cleaver—the "Black Panther Party of Southern California" which became a kind of "SNCC chapter" featuring Ron Wilkins of the Community Alert Patrol, while the "Black Panther Party of Northern California" just "disintegrated," with a shove from the victors.⁸⁷

Summarily, the SNCC-BPP merger, involving leaders of the former presumably assuming major posts, did not work out well. Cleaver recollected that Forman and Rap Brown "held back," but Carmichael was "hot for it."⁸⁸ A pistol pressed to flesh was said to have ignited a reappraisal of the merger on Forman's part. Subsequently, when he was visited in New York by Seale and his comrade William Brent, a wiser Forman requested the latter's gun, which he promptly turned over, but foxily "the gun was empty and I had another—fully loaded—strapped to the inside of my left leg."⁸⁹

At this fork in the road, Murray was Minister of Education of the BPP and a part-time instructor at San Francisco State University. Meeting the moment in October 1968, he jumped on a table in the college cafeteria and unleashed a bitter philippic in the direction of the college president, then urged arming students and a strike to demand increased admissions of Black and Mexican American students. Speaking of the beleaguered president, he said with aspersions, "The only realistic way to deal with a cracker like [Robert] Smith is to say we want 5000 Black people here in February and if he won't give it to you, you chop his head off," he shouted.⁹⁰

86. Eldridge Cleaver, *Target Zero: A Life in Writing* [ed. by Kathleen Cleaver], New York: Palgrave, 2006, 132.

87. James Forman, *The Making of Black Revolutionaries*, Seattle: Open Hand, 1990, 522, 523, 528. See also *New York Times*, 7 October 1968.

88. Remarks by Cleaver, unclear date, Carton 1, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

89. Brent, *Long Time Gone*, 109.

90. News Item, 29 October 1968, Archives of San Francisco State University Alumni, SFSU (abbrev. Archives of SFSU Alumni).

The flustered Smith was to depart unceremoniously. He was replaced by S.I. Hayakawa, whose inflexibility would win him a term (1977-83) in the U.S. Senate. Japanese-American from Chicago, he had been teaching summer school and was hesitant to reside in the Golden State because, he said, it "has an enormous, long, long reputation of being anti-Oriental [*sic*]," but yielded in 1955. Then campus leader John Summerskill was "peculiarly" and "deeply concerned about the Negro race" but then was replaced by Smith who quit after 6 months, unable to take the heat. By December 1968 the droll Hayakawa was in office and spoke of how "my Scottish [*sic*] upbringing" and his "tam o'shanter" led him into tense set-tos with militants like Murray, shooting him into massive press coverage as his feistiness was broadcast "everywhere": He claimed to have received 10,000 telegrams. As for a major student demand, he was sniffily dismissive: "I never approved of Ethnic Studies," won over his opposition nonetheless; he backed "the common culture of the American culture," said this semanticist who pushed for English as the nation's official language.⁹¹

* * *

The authorities in San Francisco, who kept a close eye on Cleaver and the BPP, treated him—and them—as if they were a reincarnation of the Revolutionary Action Movement, "organized in the winter of 1963," they thought, with Philadelphia as their base and ties to Havana. Key in their constellation was Max Stanford. They viewed Cleaver as his *doppelgänger*.⁹²

By 1968 a grand jury had been impaneled to investigate Cleaver and Seale, particularly "to determine what knowledge they have about...shooting[s]" and "whether there is an actual agreement among members to shoot policemen during the course of routine actions following the commission of a crime."⁹³

Although the above was said to have driven the flyspecking of Cleaver and his party, Mayor Joseph Alioto of San Francisco also drummed up the old-time religion, seeking to connect both to the CP. "The whites and Blacks who become linked with the Panthers," his agent said authoritatively, "in some way are either members of the Communist Party or have very close ties to it. Communist Party informants relate that the Northern California Communist Party is contributing to a fund to be used to attract Black Panthers to the Communist Party alliance," which happened to be accurate. A "prime contact" in this regard was Fredrica Kushner, "married to Samuel Kushner of 2436 Prince Street, Berkeley"; also

91. S.I. Hayakawa, Oral History, 6 April 1988, SFSU.

92. Undated analysis of BPP and RAM, Box 14, Joseph Alioto Papers, SFPL (abbrev. Joseph Alioto Papers).

93. Statement of Mayor Alioto, 21 November 1968, Box 17, Joseph Alioto Papers.

"Yetta Land, a 1919 charter member" of the CP, and naturally, attorney Treuhaft and his spouse Jessica Mitford. Then there were the Black Communist liaisons Ronald Stevenson and Roscoe Proctor, and the flamethrowing attorney Charles Garry and his partner Benjamin "Barney" Dreyfus. By May 1967, the BPP was said to be already entrenched in L.A. and San Diego—though 1968 was the year that the organization became prominent in the latter city. Alioto's "Intelligence Unit" said then—though it was unclear if the relevant universe were San Francisco or the Bay Area or statewide—that "at best they could muster 200 to 300 men." However, when the elusive Stokely Carmichael arrived in the fogbound city, he would go "directly to the home of Cleaver at 850 Oak Street."⁹⁴

There the ex-prisoner resided with his spouse Kathleen, then 23, described by an admiring reporter as having "green eyes" and "magnificent hair," referring to her bouffant. Their apartment was spacious, albeit with makeshift furniture and bricks-and-boards bookcases. Three incessantly ringing phones with extremely long cords were exhibits of their important activism.⁹⁵ She had a gun permit, but apparently the law barred him from being in a house where he had access to weaponry. She said that her "life had been threatened many times" so she chose to obtain a "357 Magnum...one of the [most] powerful handguns ever made."⁹⁶

Adding fuel to the flames of anxiety scorching the authorities was that before the BPP and CP split rudely, the latter's organ was in the forefront of demanding "Free Huey,"⁹⁷ the chief charged after a bruising confrontation with an Oakland cop. Ronnie Stevenson, a Black Communist, who had emerged as a liaison with the BPP, interviewed Newton in the Alameda County jail, who provided him with texture for understanding of the BPP, for example, the revelation that the BPP's famous 10-point program was devised in the Fall of 1966 shortly after the organization's founding.⁹⁸ Typically, Stevenson sought to indicate that the still powerful and left-led union, the stevedores, were on board with freeing Newton.⁹⁹

Stevenson's comrade, Charlene Mitchell, identified as a "Los Angeles bookkeeper," said craftily that her party had "fewer than 15,000 members" but were united in their defense of Newton. Thus, she met with Cleaver and "we offered to help in any specific way" and, importantly, "he welcomed our help."¹⁰⁰ During this time, Mitchell was effusive in her praise of the charismatic Cleaver.¹⁰¹

During Newton's trial, Communists and their allies were told that "he tried to summarize Black history from the 12th century" forward; he was depicted as

⁹⁴ Analysis, ca. May 1967, Box 14, Joseph Alioto Papers.

⁹⁵ *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 3 October 1968.

⁹⁶ *San Diego Union*, 25 September 1968.

⁹⁷ *People's World*, 23 March 1968, Reel 27, Black Panther Documents.

⁹⁸ *People's World*, 6 July 1968, Reel 27, Black Panther Documents.

⁹⁹ *People's World*, 3 August 1968, Reel 28, Black Panther Documents.

¹⁰⁰ *San Francisco Chronicle*, 17 July 1968, Reel 27, Black Panther Documents.

¹⁰¹ *San Francisco Chronicle*, 14 September 1968.

"bright, articulate and charming," indeed "handsome."¹⁰² Communists were overjoyed to report that in a race for the U.S. Congress Newton received 8% of the vote—a tally of 12,164 ballots—in the crucial November 1968 election.¹⁰³ Seale claimed the figure was closer to 30,000.¹⁰⁴ Just before that, Comrade Bettina Aptheker denounced Newton's criminal conviction as a "travesty."¹⁰⁵ Astonishingly, Judge Monroe Friedman did not recuse, though he belonged the Elks, denoted as a racially segregated fraternity.¹⁰⁶

Other than Reds, Alioto's henchmen were flabbergasted by the gathering militancy among Black youth, who were enthusiastically gravitating toward radicalism, less influenced by older patterns of moderation. Alioto's minions were upset with a BPP handbook designed to organize high school students which involved starting a newsletter featuring "discussion on topics ranging from [the] world to school to personal problems" and forming a "Black Athletes 'Union" and "sponsoring dances" and "lectures." This document, revealingly, was "picked up at Fremont High School" during "Summer 1968"¹⁰⁷ in Los Angeles. By December 1968 a headline shouted, "Fremont High School Explodes!" The issue? "Students reject white principal."¹⁰⁸ Students burned a U.S. flag as 1000 amassed in protest over suspensions of four of their leaders, though looming menacingly was the holding of a student on campus at the school to be known as California State University-Northridge on arson charges.¹⁰⁹

To their credit, the BPP targeted youth, least likely to be fixated on hidebound tradition and more likely to be willing to challenge a moth-eaten status quo. Predictively, a carload of "armed" Panthers materialized at San Rafael High School north of San Francisco with a subversive message.¹¹⁰

Cleaver was not singular either in his penchant for intoxicants nor his fondness for weapons, potentially a dangerous brew. William Brent, like Newton with roots in Louisiana and Oakland, recalled that in the former site "every home had at least one gun: a .22 rifle, a pistol...or a 12 gauge shotgun." His comrade Seale "never tried to hide the...serious drinking problems" he endured, while "everyone in the Party knew I carried my gun wherever I went." "[L]ike the rest of the Party leadership, I drank excessively, smoked weed and dropped pills on a regular basis"; in fact, "any member who didn't drink or smoke a joint once in a while wasn't completely trusted by the rest of us."¹¹¹

102. *People's World*, 31 August 1968, Reel 28, Black Panther Documents.

103. *People's World*, 9 November 1968, Reel 28, Black Panther Documents.

104. *People's World*, 16 November 1968.

105. *The Daily Californian*, 27 September 1968, Reel 28, Black Panther Documents.

106. *Berkeley Barb*, 26 September 1968, Reel 28, Black Panther Documents.

107. BPP Handbook, 1968, Box 14, Joseph Alioto Papers.

108. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 19 December 1968.

109. *Los Angeles Times*, 12 December 1968, Box 18, South L.A. 20th Century.

110. *San Rafael Independent Journal*, 20 September 1968, Reel 28, Black Panther Documents.

111. Brent, *Long Time Gone*, 104, 105.

This habit paralleled their antagonists in the FBI: Agent Michael McGowan asserts that he and his colleagues bordered on alcoholism. "They drank heavily" then "they started verbally abusing one another" in an "onslaught" that was "brutal and any sign of weakness made you a regular target" to the point where the "culture of drinking in the FBI was pervasive." Yet, the mobsters they surveilled "for the most part were light drinkers and many...didn't touch the stuff at all." This raises the specter of beclouded Panthers confronting similarly muddled opponents in an orgy of mental and physical incontinence. Also, like the BPP the FBI was capable of "quickly" being "willing to turn [on] one of their own."¹¹²

The heroizing of lumpen culture combined with the lure of intoxicants may have contributed to a significant error by the BPP: the alienation of the skilled litigator Ben Margolis, who even more than Charles Garry, was quite experienced in handling sensitive political/criminal cases.¹¹³ And with regard to the lumpen, there was no X-ray theorizing that distinguished between and among petit lumpen (small drug dealers and larcenists) and grand lumpen (drug kingpins and controllers of vast enterprises).

Intriguingly, the books by and about the "pimp" "Iceberg Slim," whose affect and "cool" became quite popular during this tumultuous era, not least among young Black men, were published in Los Angeles, just as cinema of a similar type was produced in Hollywood.¹¹⁴ An unfortunate legacy of the overheated masculinism of this convoluted era has been the valorizing of the prototypical misogynist—the "pimp." As I write, in today's argot this exploitative lumpen figure/term is often deployed promiscuously as noun, verb and adjective, sadly

112. Michael R. McGowan and Ralph Pezzullo, *Ghost: My Thirty Years as an Undercover Agent*, New York: St. Martin's, 2018, 57, 70, 197.

113. Ben Margolis, Oral History: "Charles Garry ... was during that period of time, the counsel for the Panthers. Charlie and I had been friends for many years...even before he was admitted to practice law" and "had been a client of our San Francisco office. He had a dry cleaners association of which he was president. He came to me in Los Angeles...and asked me if I would handle a case on behalf of the Panthers, who had been really persecuted and treated terribly badly by the police.... I agreed to do so.... I spent a tremendous amount of time on preparing and filing a complaint, which involved...sixty or seventy separate incidents of police violation of [BPP] rights.... We filed the case. We proceeded to move along the case and it came time where we needed further cooperation of the Panthers for further information, taking of depositions, et cetera.... We got absolutely zero cooperation. They wouldn't reply to my telephone calls. They just disappeared.... I finally had to drop the case.... I got turned off on them. While I was handling the case, there was a Lawyers Guild convention in New York City. At that convention, the Black Panthers were either honored or were an important part of the convention.... [there was] almost a continuous party, from the time that they arrived there until the time that they left...they were ordering bottles of booze from the hotel.... I was sort of turned off by the whole business...it made me doubtful about some of these people."

114. Robert Beck, *The Naked Soul of Iceberg Slim*, Los Angeles: Holloway House, 1971; Iceberg Slim, *Mama Black Widow*, Los Angeles: Holloway House, 1998; Justin Gifford, *Street Poison: The Biography of Iceberg Slim*, New York: Doubleday, 2015; Iceberg Slim, *Pimp: The Story of My Life*, Los Angeles: Holloway House, 1987.

indicative of its ubiquity—thus unveiling ideological weakness in that this deployment is hardly interrogated.

* * *

Meanwhile, Seale officially denied that the BPP was “building an arsenal,”¹¹⁵ though the semantically agile leader may simply have not defined his party’s cache with that formal term.

What had occurred was that police terror had backfired tremendously: The BPP was determined to, as the saying went, democratize the pain—dish out damage to those accustomed to perpetrating it unilaterally. It is also possible that the proliferation of intoxicants loosened inhibitions and/or expanded imaginative powers to the detriment of those routinely referred to as “pigs.” Donald Cox, BPP operative, took advantage of federalism by crossing over to Reno, Nev., from about November 1967 to February 1968 in order to purchase handguns. Already, it seemed, he had his hands on M-14 rifles, 30-30 Winchester carbines, pump shotguns, and 357 Magnum revolvers. And by May 1969 he escorted 32 BPP trainees into the verdant countryside for “guerrilla type training.” By that point, “Geronimo” Pratt had traveled to Texas to form what was called an “Underground Military Wing” for the BPP.¹¹⁶

The mainstream press reported that there was a “School for Guerrilla War” sited at San Francisco State University. Like an update of the Lenin School of the 1930s, “urban warfare” was at the heart of a curriculum that included tutelage in “sabotage, espionage, counter-intelligence and weaponry with emphasis on the Battle of Algeria,” the pre-independence reality and the cinematic version. Naturally, there were readings, and the instructor was Robert Kaffke, who, reportedly, had sojourned in Cuba, was “fluent in Spanish,” and had been arrested in Nicaragua.¹¹⁷ There were 125 eager students absorbing this education,¹¹⁸ that included praise heaped on the pied piper of the era who also influenced the BPP: Régis Debray.¹¹⁹

Students for a Democratic Society, a wing of which sought to emulate the BPP, decided to hold a guerrilla warfare “workshop.”¹²⁰ Whatever the efficacy of this pedagogy, days after this report, just north of San Francisco in Vallejo, 500

115. *Berkeley Barb*, 28 March 1968, Reel 27, Black Panther Documents.

116. Derek Ide, “The Anticolonial International: Black Internationalism and the Palestinian Revolution,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Houston, 2023, 233, 234, 258.

117. *San Francisco Examiner-Chronicle*, 21 April 1968, Reel 27, Black Panther Documents.

118. Report, 14 March 1968, Box 69, 93-04-12 D4178 P3, Bay Area Reports, CUAC Records.

119. *San Francisco Examiner-Chronicle*, 14 September 1968.

120. *Daily Californian*, 23 February 1968, Box 69, 93-04-12 D4178 P3, Bay Area Reports, CUAC Records.

pounds of dynamite in 10 cases weighing 50 pounds each were found in a garage.¹²¹

Across the bay, the BPP headquarters in Oakland was said to represent the theme, "Guns to Guerrillas."¹²² From nearby Hayward arrived the dispatch: "guerrilla war threat grows."¹²³

Cleaver had become the most articulate and impassioned advocate of this philosophy. Without an iota of regret, he found "little hope of avoiding armed open armed war in the streets of California," while his comrade Seale, speaking on Radio Havana, purportedly counseled, "We must use incendiary cocktails and operate in small groups," seize power and form "a Socialist State."¹²⁴ It was not just the heady Cuba atmosphere that had animated Seale's imagination. Back home he was said to have insisted that Black folk "must unify around the gun," to wit, "get a rod in your hand and deal with the power structure."¹²⁵

By dint of his finely tuned rhetorical skills, it was Cleaver who was becoming the chief spokesman for the BPP, especially in light of the detention of Newton, whose high-pitched voice—his muscular torso notwithstanding—hampered his ability to fill this strategic bill. Thus, it was the Angeleno who threatened that "if Huey is executed," because of his violent encounter with an Oakland cop, "there will be war." This was his message to 500 in San Mateo, south of San Francisco—"mainly whites," said an observer¹²⁶—and a similar message was delivered in Palo Alto.¹²⁷ (When the Black militant Ahmed Evans of Cleveland was accused in the killing of three cops and the wounding of a dozen others, Cleaver trooped to the United Nations to declare this to be a "hopeful sign."¹²⁸) Tempers were flaring as a result. Ree Williams of 2527 Hacienda Street in San Mateo was blunt: "I fear that the current white reactions to the growing Black reactions will lead to fascism in this country."¹²⁹ Perilously, the patron saint of conservatism, William F. Buckley, had sought to shift the spotlight to focus on purported "Creeping Black Racism," providing a rationale for a two-barreled assault on this beleaguered community.¹³⁰ Extraordinarily, as Buckley was raising an alarm, Jim Crow Alabama Gov. George Wallace addressed 10,000 adoring fans at the Cow Palace in San Francisco—though not necessarily cowing the five Panthers present.¹³¹

121. *San Francisco Examiner*, 19 March 1968.

122. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 16 May 1968, Reel 27, Black Panther Documents.

123. *Hayward Daily Review*, 15 December 1968, Reel 27, Black Panther Documents.

124. *Berkeley Gazette*, 28 August 1968, Reel 27, Black Panther Documents.

125. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 9 March 1968, Reel 27, Black Panther Documents.

126. *Redwood City Tribune*, 22 July 1968, Reel 27, Black Panther Documents.

127. *Palo Alto Times*, 22 July 1968, Reel 27, Black Panther Documents.

128. *New York Times*, 25 July 1968.

129. *Burlingame Advance Star*, 10 March 1968, Reel 27, Black Panther Documents.

130. *San Francisco Examiner*, ca. October 1968, Reel 28, Black Panther Documents.

131. *Santa Rosa Press Democrat*, 14 October 1968, Reel 28, Black Panther Documents.

The Communist press observed that Wallace had received a higher vote in "working class" communities of Fremont, compared to Piedmont—the "rich enclave" also adjoining Oakland—but did not bother to speculate as to why this class collaborationism existed.¹³² Roscoe Proctor already had suggested that this contributed to the lack of "confidence" among the Black working class in their class brethren, driving many of them into the arms of the Nation of Islam. An analysis of this sad state of affairs would have involved a searching critique of settler colonialism, then beyond the ideological ken.

Cleaver was unmoved. Reformatting his ideological odyssey to comport with the current moment, he told an audience at Santa Clara University that he had been a Catholic for "about a year" while at the Whittier Reformatory, then defected to the Nation of Islam because "I could relate to their talk of guns."¹³³

In a bitter reminder of their brandishing of weapons in the Sacramento Capitol, in 1968 the BPP revisited the scene of the alleged crime with similar impact. At the same time famed writer James Baldwin visited a detained Huey P. Newton, indicative of the star power and mass support the BPP was gathering.¹³⁴

* * *

In some ways—and Panthers set aside—L.A. was the capital of Black Power. The forces surrounding Karenga evidenced this trend. Wondrously, a local columnist observed as early as August 1967 that "for months you have not been able to pass a day without seeing some expression of 'Black Power' being verbalized"; still, "US, like the national Black Muslim organization, has an admittedly small membership"—by design as far as Karenga was concerned.¹³⁵ When the LAPD lagged other major cities in recruiting Black cops—320 out of 6392 by late 1967—it was suggestive of the influence of Black Power in the city, which restrained those seeking to join the embattled department.¹³⁶ Another restraint was the news that Oscar Joel Bryant was slain in May 1968, the first LAPD Negro officer killed in the line of duty¹³⁷—but not the last.

An indicator of the spreading influence of these detachments—broadly speaking—was that they were sufficiently audacious to aggressively confront those who imagined they were in Haight-Ashbury during the "Summer of Love." "Nationalists block Love-in," read the headline depicting the standoff between

132. *People's World*, 7 December 1968, Reel 28, Black Panther Documents.

133. *San Francisco Examiner*, 10 August 1968, Reel 28, Black Panther Documents.

134. *Oakland Tribune*, 3 May 1968, Reel 27, Black Panther Documents.

135. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 24 August 1967.

136. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 12 October 1967.

137. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 16 May 1968.

"Black Power" versus "Green Power," as the latter "backed down" from staging a "love-in" near the offices of the Non-Violent Action Committee at 4163 South Central. "Black Power advocates...announced that violence would erupt if the mixed gathering was held."¹³⁸

More muscles flexed meant more negative attention. "Nab 'Black Power' leader as burglar," was the story a few days later limning "Tommy Ray Jacques...head of [a] local militant Black Nationalist group" sited at 1673 East 1108th Street and a mere 23 years old "was wearing a 'Malcolm X' sweatshirt...when he was arrested."¹³⁹ Jacques was vindicated—tall with a voice like Robeson's, according to the BPP's Elaine Brown¹⁴⁰—and acquitted when it seemed that he was in San Diego at the time of the burglary. The idea of police harassment of activists was validated.¹⁴¹

It was not just Jacques. Karenga complained that he and his comrades were being harassed by the police, causing Walter Bremond of the newly organized Black Congress to aver that the Community Alert Patrol would resume in order to check the police. This announcement did not deter cops who, it was asserted, chose to "nab Black Nationalists on marijuana rap," meaning Karenga's colleagues were accosted in Beverly Hills.¹⁴² Then Karenga's spouse threatened to sue the cops after she was accused of shoplifting.¹⁴³

At this juncture the commonality of police harassment had driven variegated trends of the incipient Black Power trend together. This was evident in February 1968, when assembling at the Sports Arena were Karenga, Carmichael, Oscar Brown, Jr. and Jean Pace under the banner of "Free Huey," the paramount BPP leader.¹⁴⁴ Thousands of beautiful Black people" were there, said an affected observer, sporting a "sea of Afros and bright colors." The "broad shouldered" Cleaver was present.¹⁴⁵

At an Oakland rally for Newton, Cleaver recited the iconic poem of Jamaican poet Claude McKay, "If we must die," and saluted Malcolm and John Brown. Curtis Mayfield, wildly popular singer, crooned. H. Rap Brown enthralled many when he said, "The only thing is going to free you is gun powder. Black powder." He cited Che Guevara and Mao—"power comes from the barrel of a gun." "White folks are buying guns," he warned. As for President Johnson, he was "Hitler's illegitimate child and J. Edgar Hoover is his half-sister."¹⁴⁶ Brown had become a prime articulator of the gathering militancy that redounded to the benefit of the

¹³⁸. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 3 August 1967.

¹³⁹. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 31 August 1967.

¹⁴⁰. Elaine Brown, *A Taste of Power*, 104.

¹⁴¹. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 8 February 1968.

¹⁴². *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 14 September 1967.

¹⁴³. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 1 February 1968.

¹⁴⁴. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 15 February 1968.

¹⁴⁵. Pharr, *Nine Lives*, 92.

¹⁴⁶. Report, 17 February 1968, Carton 27, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

BPP—in the short term. He was “warmly greeted” in L.A., said observer Quincy Troupe, as he appeared on a program with Karenga and Newton. “Arm ourselves” was his message, and predictively the LAPD “harassed Brown throughout the time he was here. This writer attended the reception held for Brown...and saw policemen peering through the windows...sitting in unmarked cars.” The headline? “Uhuru [freedom] militants.”¹⁴⁷

Not only the BPP but SNCC and US too united on the platform of the right to self-defense, including the armed variety. US was swimming alongside their then allies, recruiting disgruntled Black soldiers in Vietnam and intervening in local politics, backing Dymally for high office in 1967.¹⁴⁸

The Black Power ideology may not have had an analysis of capitalism—they barely had a historically grounded view of their understandable preoccupation, White Supremacy. But to their credit they did to a degree exude alienation from the status quo, thus jeopardizing it. These folks were not necessarily flag-wavers, and their influence did spread. Thus, amidst the headlines with Black estrangement dripping from every pore of society, two U.S. army sergeants, Leonard J. Stafford and Ulysses Harris, were arrested for seeking to pass information to Moscow, including, it was said, “films and other national defense [information].”¹⁴⁹ And these were not ideologically driven Communists. Similarly, the *Sentinel* reported in late 1968 that “Black Power swells in churches as Negro leaders demand voice in denominations.”¹⁵⁰

Nevertheless, the growing preeminence of Black Power did not prevent scrapes at San Quentin involving Nation of Islam believers battling “San Quentin hoods.”¹⁵¹

This battle behind bars was emblematic of a burgeoning violence, generated in the first instance by the normative functioning of capitalism, funded by enslavement of Africans. Not atypical was a random incident at a meeting of the Black Congress—pictured as a “Little United Nations,” ostensibly incorporating a broad array of groups beginning in about 1965.¹⁵² However, by July 1968, Karenga’s comrades assaulted four with rifle butts at one of their meetings as the unfortunates were beaten for two hours, in addition, with sticks, as these unfortunate victims, said a cynical observer, were “used for karate practice.” Why? The victims were accused of being “hostile” to the aims of the Congress.¹⁵³

147. Undated article by Troupe, Box 1, Ron Wilkins Papers.

148. Scot Brown, *Fighting for US*, 78, 81, 85.

149. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 31 August 1967.

150. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 28 November 1968.

151. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 12 October 1967.

152. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 6 June 1968.

153. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 11 July 1968.

Days later a newspaper headline shouted, "Watts Explodes on Anniversary"; 41 were wounded as a confrontation unfolded between the "Sons of Watts" and their Panther challengers. Three individuals, all Black, were killed, and six cops were wounded in the legs by pellet guns. Lights were shot out, hindering apprehension of the assailants, as innocents fled helter-skelter, and cops and snipers exchanged fire. Then across town, at the campus of Cal-State L.A., ten Black students organized in the recently formed Black Student Union entered the office of the Director of Admissions, over-turning file cabinets and office machines. Why? This bureaucrat did not accept their demand for what was called "complete control" over admission of students flagged by the very same BSU.¹⁵⁴

As if some individuals were seeking to outdo their counterparts, a bomb was found at UCLA in an apparent attempt to blow up Bunche Hall, named after the Negro Nobel Laureate. The explosive was found accusingly near the BSU office. There was immense grumbling on campus about the enervating reality that out of 28,000 students, 700 were Black, with only 12 Negro professors (soon to be joined by Angela Davis). Grumbling intensified when recently installed Chancellor Charles Young reactively announced, "I have not made a commitment to recruit more Black faculty. Nor shall I ever make such a patently absurd and shameful commitment"—a bizarre stance from which he retreated rapidly under sustained fire. Apparently, he did not descend to the depths scraped by William R. Allen, chairman of the Department of Economics, who obtained a 12-gauge shotgun after threatening phone calls and a rancorous dispute with the BSU over more hiring of Black economists.¹⁵⁵

Then there were a reported 3000 militants at a hearing on police brutality who proceeded to stage a walkout: The Black Congress was involved but the spokesman was Oscar Acosta.¹⁵⁶ Then the Malcolm X Foundation at 430 East Compton Boulevard was bombed. Their angry leader, Hakim Jamal, wailed that "The whole building was gutted."¹⁵⁷ Before that, Black attorney George Cannady was stabbed to death.¹⁵⁸

This was an extraordinary moment when reaction to centuries of oppression burst forth in several directions, generating diverse reactions. In San Diego, retired naval officer John Waters demanded that UC's La Jolla campus be subjected to "martial law" because of the danger presented by Cleaver and his BPP. He stressed Cleaver's admission in his bestselling book that he was an unapologetic rapist, not least in retaliatory fashion against Euro-American women. It would be "equally logical," Waters charged, "if white Americans

154. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 15 August 1968. See also *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 8 August 1968: "4 Shot" at Watts Festival.

155. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 14 November 1968.

156. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 29 August 1968.

157. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 24 October 1968.

158. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 25 July 1968.

cooked and ate him because of his, the white man's resentment of the way Cleaver's progenitors killed, cooked and ate white missionaries." Thus, he demanded that campus administrators "use any means necessary for enforcing the law." That was not all. "In view of the strong gynec [sic] (female) inclinations evinced by so many of the many troublemakers I would request medical authorities at the University to conduct research necessary to determine if the use of LSD, marijuana or other drugs...might be involved in their...imbalances"; this, he concluded triumphantly in his lengthy missive also forwarded to Gov. Reagan and Bircher State Senator John Schmitz, "would...receive the support of at least 95 percent of the citizens of California."¹⁵⁹

What had instigated Captain Waters's tirade was the appearance of Cleaver in La Jolla. As ever, his arrival was preceded by massive publicity which served to drive attendees to hear him.¹⁶⁰ There was an "overflow audience," said Dr. Warren E. Hawes of La Mesa, while "loudspeakers were set up on the lawn."¹⁶¹ The Panther addressed 2500 at the college gym, and 2000 listened on the lawn, though he appeared a fashionable hour late.¹⁶² Dr. Vernon Van Zandt was outraged to find that "everyone entering the hall...was 'frisked' by member of the Black Panther Party."¹⁶³ The conservative consensus was captured by Arthur Harris of Escondido: First the campus hires Herbert Marcuse, mentor to Angela Davis, now Cleaver arrives¹⁶⁴—what next? George Gilson of San Diego concurred: Marcuse and Cleaver were linked in "Marxism," though the "basic difference is that one is an S.O.B., the other a Ph.d."¹⁶⁵

Walter Schenck spoke similarly, setting the stage for a firestorm of protest to emerge when Angela Davis grabbed headlines, and her advisor, Marcuse, was demonized.¹⁶⁶

Part of the problem in San Diego was the abandonment of the city by activists, including Harold Brown, once a force in CORE, who by 1968 was in exile in Southern Africa. There was no surcease in this apartheid drenched land, as remarks emerged from there that appeared in a Southland story about him that was designed to discredit his cause: the "only good white man [is] a dead one"¹⁶⁷—an epigraph of an era of unrest. Lesotho, where he wound up, was no

159. John Waters to Chancellor McGill, 27 November 1968, Box 247, Chancellor Subject Files.

160. *Los Angeles Times*, 29 November 1968.

161. Dr. Hawes to Chancellor McGill, 6 October 1968, Box 247, Chancellor Subject Files.

162. *La Jolla Light and La Jolla Journal*, 10 October 1968, Box 247, Chancellor Subject Files.

163. Dr. Vernon Van Zandt to Chancellor McGill, 28 October 1968, Box 247, Chancellor Subject Files.

164. Arthur Harris to Chancellor McGill, 12 October 1968, Box 247, Chancellor Subject Files.

165. George Gilson to Chancellor McGill, 15 November 1968, Box 247, Chancellor Subject Files.

166. Walter Schenck to Chancellor McGill, 11 October 1968, Box 247, Chancellor Subject Files.

167. *San Diego Tribune*, 2 June 1968, Box 3, Harold Brown Papers.

sanctuary. He was accused of "advocating Black Power" there, a notion promoted across the border in South Africa.¹⁶⁸

San Diego well prepared Brown to grapple with apartheid. Indigenous Basotho "regard the Afro-American as their brother," not endearing in Pretoria, where the "political situation is intense" as the "Vietnam war" was shaping anti-U.S. sentiment. They admired boxer Muhammad Ali while the strict Jim Crow in Maseru made him feel at home. Yet despite writing an eight-page, single-spaced missive, there was no mention of the ultimately triumphant African National Congress, but quite a bit on the black-white dyad,¹⁶⁹ customary for the era.

Brown had arrived in San Diego in 1953 to play basketball, having starred at the sport at Penn State. He had spent two years in the military and received a MBA from Fordham before founding CORE in the "dandy" town in 1960. Before their activism, Negroes were not hired in downtown retail stores, in hotels, restaurants and as bus drivers, salesmen and bank tellers. They could be found in some defense plants, a concession to the importance of national security. While they were protesting at the Bank of America, human feces were dumped on him and his comrades, a travesty ignored except in the Negro press. He spent 45 days in jail before decamping to Lesotho, where he served for a while as deputy director of the Peace Corps—well positioned to confront apartheid across the border.¹⁷⁰ He departed with hosannas ringing in his ears, including from State Senator Mervyn Dymally and Mayor Frank Curran.¹⁷¹

In any event, Chancellor William McGill of UCSD was under fire for allowing this Cleaver event to occur and soon would depart to greener pastures heading Columbia University. The local Republican Party was unreserved: "We condemn the Chancellor," they bleated, as they went on to endorse William Ayers, a legislative candidate, for having the audacity to "personally confront" Cleaver.¹⁷² Under the barrage of criticism, McGill was ferocious in his lambasting of Cleaver. He "bombed out. His talk lasted more than an hour" and was a "mixture of a nightclub act, utter obscenity and kindergarten Marxism." "[T]he Cleaver Affair" had "shaken the University to its foundations," buoyed since "fear is abroad in the United States," which was accurate. He feared an undefined "reactivity in the Black community"—possibly akin to Watts in August 1965?—as a result, and that those behind Cleaver and Marcuse might combine.¹⁷³ When Marcuse spoke at UCLA—actually honored during the "First Annual Hans

168. *Sunday Express*, 2 June 1968, Box 3, Harold Brown Papers.

169. "Eyes Only" letter from Brown, 21 February 1968, Box 3, Harold Brown Papers.

170. "Catfish Lines," October 1990, Box 3, Harold Brown Papers. It was reported that Kathleen Cleaver also once worked in the Peace Corps' Washington office: *Human Events*, 21 December 1968, INS #5 9E3 1.83-75, Box 949, Record Group 233, CP Files Part IV, HUAC Records.

171. Testimonial, 22 July 1967, Box 3, Harold Brown Papers.

172. Resolution of San Diego County Central Committee of Republican Party, ca. October 1968, Box 247, Chancellor Subject Files.

173. Chancellor McGill to John Galbraith, 5 October 1968, Box 249, Chancellor Subject Files.

Meyerhoff Lecture” at a moment of frenzy about Cleaver—the idea congealed that the two radicals were combining.¹⁷⁴

Days after Cleaver’s heralded arrival in La Jolla, Regents of the University of California assembled in Santa Cruz. “I saw Catherine Hearst,” well-heeled heiress, said McGill, who was “engaging in a kicking match with a very tiny Black Panther who seemed to come up to her ears” and then another comrade “jumped on his back,” speaking of a man who came to Hearst’s defense. Cleaver was at issue and the comrades arrived in force from San Francisco State University, along with “quite a number of militant visitors from Stanford.”¹⁷⁵ A more sober reporter described what transpired as “one of the angriest student demonstrations in UC history,” as protesters “banged on doors, peered through windows, beat drums, shouted...600...demonstrated.” At issue? Not only Cleaver but naming a college at UCSC after Malcolm X, the Angeleno’s role model.¹⁷⁶

McGill was ill-prepared for this level of politics. He had arrived in La Jolla as a professor in July 1965 and found a campus “seething with discontent” propelled by “prima donnas” and “neurotics” locked in “very competitive” battles: a typical university in other words. The “least crisis that comes along,” he argued, “blows the place apart,” often with “Marxist students” in the vanguard. His own psychology department involved “constant battles for position” while the philosophy department of Marcuse and Davis was “always volatile”; the German-born scholar was an “extraordinary man, quite a remarkable thinker” and was “the heart of the problem” since “he attracted...some of the most volatile Marxist radicals I have ever seen.” Then La Jolla itself “was filled with retired admirals” and “the mix was not a healthy one.” Then there was Dr. Linus Pauling, Nobel Laureate, a “great genius” with a “bad political reputation” and an “appalling desire to [get] his name in the newspapers.” As for the president of the University of California, he was “not a very articulate man” though he was “most honorable”: he “would never lie to me.” The “grubbiness of conflict” then was driven by the toxic combination of Gov. Reagan, Marcuse and Davis, “the leading member of our student body.” His predecessor, John Galbraith, “tall, white haired, extremely handsome”—but with “no stomach for conflict...he saw the trouble and got out.”

McGill was appointed to replace him in June 1968 and to that point “never held authority [of that magnitude] in my life”; that Reagan voted against him was discomfiting. There was a “developing race problem,” meaning unrelenting pressure had led to admission of “most ghetto Blacks” from L.A. and “ghetto Chicanos” from San Diego “with a leadership cadre of very tough Marxist students” who had been recruited from Europe. As he was arriving, Marcuse had been threatened by the Klan and “he went into hiding” while “racial tensions that I didn’t know anything about” and “radical activity that I didn’t know anything

174. Leaflet, 31 October 1968, Box 5, Robert Chandler Collection.

175. Chancellor McGill to John Galbraith, 20 October 1968, Box 249, Chancellor Subject Files.

176. *Los Angeles Times*, 18 October 1968.

about" both escalated. The inevitable then occurred: He endured an "attack of anxiety some time in early October," just before Cleaver's arrival—not coincidentally? "I fainted in the Chancellor's office," "thought I'd had a heart attack," and was "under stress." Then Cleaver arrived and "all hell broke loose" as a "local politician" tried to "seize [him] and put him under citizen's arrest." By November a student strike was detonated in La Jolla after the Regents moved to prevent the argumentative Cleaver from arriving at the Berkeley campus and a nervous McGill went out to confront 400 students: "I was just stricken with anxiety," said the unprepared administrator. "I've never had an overpowering feeling like that" as he became "embroiled in an argument with Black students" and "radicals....it was getting dark, it was getting cold," for La Jolla at least. "I was shaking," but "from that moment to this," he said more than a decade later, "I have never had any fear of a crowd" as he began "focusing hostility on [himself] and then making the crowd feel guilty." It "turns out to be a political art," he said smugly. Yet, the beat went on as "every other week there was a sit-in or a struggle of one kind or another." So, a year later he began interviewing with Columbia and then left the beachside campus,¹⁷⁷ quite a leap for a man of modest means: His father was born in Liverpool in 1898 and as a musician worked for the band led by the appropriately named Paul Whiteman, dubbed by the unknowing as the "King of Jazz"; his father was a former radical who worked for Local 802 of the Musicians' Union; as for his mother, she was of Irish descent too.¹⁷⁸ Born in New York City in 1922, McGill received a doctorate in experimental psychology from Harvard in 1953.¹⁷⁹

The La Jolla campus was buffeted by contrasting forces: the "Marxist radicals" who dogged McGill, facing off confrontationally with a formidable phalanx of Birchers. The philosopher Avrum Stroll had noticed as early as 1966 that there was "undue pressure being exerted by members of the local chapter of the John Birch Society on this campus," led by the retired navy man still known intimidatingly as "Commander L.B. Ensey, coordinator" of JBS—Marcuse's tormentor.¹⁸⁰

College students arose in protest when a campaign was launched to bar Cleaver from campus; the official line was "Freedom of Speech," though the entire Red Scare demonstrated that this tended to be honored in the breach. Chancellor McGill was not the only administrator forced to grapple with this glaring contradiction. There was considerable property damage at the Berkeley

¹⁷⁷ William McGill, Oral History, June and July of 1979 and May 1980, Box 5 (abbrev. William McGill, Oral History), William McGill Papers, UCSD-La Jolla (abbrev. William McGill Papers).

¹⁷⁸ William McGill, Oral History, ca. 1980, Box 6.

¹⁷⁹ McGill C.V., February 1970, Box 5, William McGill Papers.

¹⁸⁰ Avrum Stroll, 12 December 1966, Box 43, William McGill Papers.

campus after the Regents sought to bar Cleaver.¹⁸¹ As with La Jolla, students there went on strike.¹⁸² Prematurely, the *Los Angeles Times*, still struggling with its transition from conservatism to liberalism, termed the strike a “failure,”¹⁸³ unable to tease out the immense ripple effects.

Cleaver was also blamed for agitation—and cogitation—in Orange County, a fortress of reaction. Readers in Fullerton were informed that—according to Cleaver—“We need lawyers today who have a lawbook in one hand and a gun in the other.”¹⁸⁴ Archivists at the UC campus in Irvine found it worthy of retention what he told lawyers who asked what could they do to aid Black folk. His response? “Give them machine guns.”¹⁸⁵ Metronomically, these remarks drew howls of anguish in the local press (which again coupled Cleaver with Marcuse).¹⁸⁶

Peals of fury notwithstanding, that late September 1968 Cleaver, dressed fashionably in a black turtleneck and dark, skin-tight pants coupled with what were called “Beatle Boots,” arrived to speak on the already sprawling Irvine campus. A critic posing as a journalist was contemptuously scornful, alleging that he “would have been thrown out of any Skid Row bar for the language he used” as he threatened that “his party would use hydrogen bombs if necessary” to win demands. He had been paid a handsome “\$400 honorarium and travel [costs].”¹⁸⁷

Cleaver was not at issue when the school now known as California State University-Northridge, in the San Fernando Valley of L.A. County, exploded in protest. Ultimately, 19 students were convicted of felonies, delineated as the “first mass felony convictions of student dissidents in the history of the country.”

Sentences ranged to upward of 25 years in prison. The spark was simple: there were only dozens of Black students out of 18,000 and those were disproportionately athletes. Footballers were in the vanguard after racist slurs uttered by clueless coaches. The demand was for more Black students, faculty, and staff. Gov. Reagan, contrastingly, thought that “demonstrators should be dragged off by the [nape] of their neck.” Confrontations meant many Black students were injured gravely.¹⁸⁸ Fires at the campus caused \$100,000 in

181. *Los Angeles Times*, 31 October 1968, Box 1, UA 133, Collection on Race, Ethnicity and Student Activism, UC-Riverside (abbrev. Collection on Race).

182. *Daily Bruin* [UCLA], 29 October 1968, Box 1, UA 133, Collection on Race.

183. *Los Angeles Times*, 30 October 1968, Box 1, UA 133, Collection on Race.

184. *Fullerton News Tribune*, 18 September 1968, Series 3, Box 24, Central Records Collection, UC-Irvine (abbrev. Central Records Collection, UC-Irvine).

185. *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, 18 September 1968, Series 3, Box 24, Central Records Collection, UC-Irvine.

186. *Orange County Evening News*, 22 September 1968, Series 3, Box 24, Central Records Collection, UC-Irvine.

187. *Orange County Register*, 27 September 1968, Series 3, Box 24, Central Records Collection, UC-Irvine.

188. Earl Anthony, *The Time of the Furnaces: A Case Study of Black Student Revolt*, New York: Dial 1971, 13, 25, 27, 28, 34, 61, 66, 73.

damage.¹⁸⁹“ Were knives used to threaten 34 hostages when the administration building” was “seized” by students, asked one provocative headline.¹⁹⁰ More than two dozen students were charged with felonies.¹⁹¹

Teachers at Manual Arts High School backed the besieged students, as did the American Federation of Teachers—even the NAACP—which recruited Black Sacramento attorney Nathaniel Colley and former Smith Act counsel A.L. Wirin to defend them,¹⁹² a positive sign, likely signaling a false dawn.

189. *People's World*, 14 December 1968.

190. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 7 November 1968.

191. *People's World*, 16 November 1968.

192. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 5 December 1968.

Chapter 11

“They’re Shooting Back,” 1969

As 1968 bled into 1969—an all too accurate verb given the repetitive deaths of Panthers—Cleaver was at the tip of the spear, repeatedly raising the fearsome specter of “Fascism.”¹ The BPP newspaper carried a front-page article in mid-1969 promulgating the apt formula that “capitalism plus racism...breeds fascism.”²

There was the shootout in Oakland following the assassination of Dr. King with the Angeleno conceding that he instigated the tumult that led to martyrdom for Little Bobby Hutton whose mettle was demonstrated at the instrumental manifestation in Sacramento in May 1967.³ The killing of Hutton was the most obvious aspect of this Cleaver miscalculation: Supposedly, he listened to bullets barely miss him for about 30 minutes, before stripping naked and surrendering—so that it could not be said he had secreted a weapon to pull at the last second. Some of the bullets whizzed through the house where Cleaver and Hutton were barricaded; a fire ensued which had begun in the basement.⁴ Supposedly, Cleaver was armed with a machine gun, then had fled with Hutton to 1218-28th Street in West Oakland.⁵

The tumult of April 1968 was not unique. According to Kathleen Cleaver, speaking in 1969, it was on 16 January 1968 at 3 a.m. the morning before a scheduled BPP rally, San Francisco cops “kicked down the door to our apartment, barged in with drawn guns and ransacked the place,” leaving both on edge. After the Hutton slaying she “finally saw Eldridge at 11:00 a.m. on April 7 in...Vacaville...medical facility [prison]. He was in a wheelchair, completely covered with burns, bruises and cuts and his foot was bandaged.” Yet even then he “staked his life on saving Huey from the gas chamber.” After being sprung, he continued this crusade—“he drove many different cars” to escape official scrutiny and “stayed in many different places.” He was the “key organizer and spokesman

1. *The Black Panther*, 31 May 1969.

2. *The Black Panther*, 14 June 1969.

3. Davis and Wiener, *Set the Night on Fire*, 323. See also Tackwood, *Glasshouse Tapes*, 106.

4. Major, *A Panther*, 192. 97.

5. Gifford, *Revolution or Death*, 158.

of the Free Huey Movement," leading to his nomination for president over Dick Gregory on the Peace & Freedom Party ticket. Still furious over the January 1968 attack, "he started cursing in his speeches," which became his trademark. He was a bestselling author, but a revengeful state meant that "all the money from his books...is being held in lien by the [Internal Revenue Service]," leaving her in anger. "I say with Robert F. Williams, 'Let it burn, let it burn,'" speaking of the nation in which she then resided.⁶ According to the FBI, the Cleavers were not cowed in that weeks later they were meeting in that same San Francisco apartment with Bobby Seale and also present were "two loaded weapons—a .38 caliber revolver and a .38 caliber snub nosed revolver."⁷

Again, even before the intensity of April 1968, signs were pointing in that tumultuous direction. Ericka Huggins later vividly recalled a time in late February 1968 when Cleaver "came down [from] up north to speak to the chapter," with stalwart brothers Ronald and Roland Freeman present. "I'll never forget...he blew those Black Congress fools away that night, including Karenga.... Kathleen was with him and Little Bobby [Hutton] too," marking a "turning point in L.A. party history.... we began to open up other offices...80th and Broadway, the West Side, Compton...but before we left the Black Congress, Little Bobby was killed. The rage in me," she declared, "was enough to destroy everything in blue...I couldn't cry."⁸

Cleaver was then at the apex of his popularity, as his book was flying off bookstore shelves. Said one dazed journalist in early 1969, there were "periods during the last six months when not one bookstore in Los Angeles could boast of having one copy," as all had been sold due to "tremendous demand."⁹ As he began to consider fleeing for exile in Cuba, then Algeria, a reported "two thousand" supporters surrounded his San Francisco residence, including children from a nearby school to sing songs, constituting a form of protection from marauding cops.¹⁰

But it was not just Cleaver who was objecting to the overall strategic line of the movement. In the wake of the slaying of Dr. King, another Angeleno, the imprisoned George Jackson, concluded that the "concept of nonviolence is a false ideal....I most certainly need both sides of my head," he said drolly, so he questioned the cleric's suggestion to "turn the other cheek."¹¹ The imprisoned Panther was in line with his comrades who grouped Dr. King alongside his aide, Bayard Rustin, Roy Wilkins of the NAACP, Floyd McKissick of CORE,

6. *The Black Panther*, 8 August 1969.

7. Report, 16 February 1968, Carton 26, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

8. *The Black Panther*, 13 February 1971.

9. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 20 February 1969.

10. Major, *A Panther*, 261.

11. Jackson, *Soledad Brother*, 167-168.

bureaucrat Robert Weaver, the Urban League's Whitney Young, even writer James Baldwin: "bootlickers" all was their harsh evaluation.¹²

Karenga, who had seemed to be in tune—to a degree—with the BPP (recall his February 1968 appearance on a platform with the latter's leaders), stubbed his toe when reports emerged that he met with Governor Reagan, an enemy in Panther parlance, in the aftermath of the April 1968 turbulence. Reflective of the turmoil was the reality that about a year later the "Black Congress" which had brought diverse forces under one umbrella, was essentially defunct. The writer Le Roi Jones, a Karenga comrade whom Cleaver had admired from afar, turned with a vengeance against this prime Panther on a sensitive matter. The poet waxed furiously in his castigation of Cleaver's "love of Beverly Axelrod" which "has left terrible Marx on the dirty Lenin Black people have been given by some dudes with some dead 1930s white ideology as [a] freedom suit."¹³ The two wordsmiths were acquainted, having appeared jointly at a writers' workshop—alongside playwright Ed Bullins—in San Francisco.¹⁴

Still, Cleaver was unamused. Nor were those growing circles of African Americans influenced by liberation struggle leaders in the Caribbean and Africa, who were socialist oriented, including Nkrumah, Mandela, Cabral, and others. For it was Bobby Seale himself who denounced the "capitalist system as a class system," whereas the BPP was "talking about socialism." He justified his support for class struggle since "there's a few John Browns around" while the "Cultural Nationalist"—meaning Karenga—"is a fool," though he squared the circle by noting that "our organization doesn't have any white people as members."¹⁵ L.A. Panther Russell Washington declared "We are revolutionaries [and] practice dialectical materialism."¹⁶ His comrade, the erstwhile longshoreman David Hilliard, concurred. After returning from Algeria in 1969 he remained firm in the belief that "it's a class struggle" that was crucial: "that's the reason why the attacks are so continuous." He had "discussions with several liberation groups in Africa" while in Algiers, which did little to shake this foundational belief.¹⁷ (In August 1969, the party was cheered by Al Fatah of Palestine at a cultural festival in Algiers.¹⁸)

This global reach was pushing the BPP in a direction it was headed. It was also in Algiers that Cleaver, Hilliard, Hewitt, Emory Douglas, among others, enjoyed a discussion with "African and Haitian liberation fighters," including battle-hardened cadre from Angola and Zimbabwe. Said one of the latter, "If our

12. *The Black Panther*, 20 July 1967.

13. Scot Brown, *Fighting for US*, 93, 99.

14. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 7-13 July 1967.

15. *The Black Panther*, 3 March 1969.

16. Pharr, *Nine Lives*, 108.

17. *The Black Panther*, 8 August 1969.

18. *The Black Panther*, 9 August 1969, in Heath, *Black Panther Leaders*, 100-101.

Afro-American brothers score a success in the United States that success is not only theirs, it is ours too.”¹⁹ The French Federation of Black African Students in Paris telegraphed the BPP office at 4115 South Central in Los Angeles in strict solidarity.²⁰ During these times when the BPP was in sync with the overall thrust of Havana and Moscow, reprints from African National Congress of South Africa publications were not uncommon, along with pictures of Nelson Mandela and related global news.²¹

Their socialism extended planetarily: Unimpressed with the lunar landing that had just astonished the world, the BPP extended their ideology arguing that “the moon belongs to the people.”²²

It was Hilliard who told the counter-cultural *Berkeley Barb* after being queried about the “picture of Stalin around” their offices, that “We’re still waiting for the John Browns in the white community” to arise, since his comrades already had “overthrown the Black Bourgeoisie, the Roy Wilkins, the James Farmers, the A. Philip Randolphins.” Still, he refuted the “fascist pig tactic to try to say that the [BPP] is led by the Communist Party and we’re not against Communism—we dig Communism. [But] we have criticisms of the American Communist Party.”²³

Yet, to their credit—unlike other forces on the left—the BPP did not ignore the original inhabitants of the continent, denouncing the “persecution of Nevada Indians” and invoking the iconography of an Indigenous warrior on horseback with the still potent credo: “There can never be peace between the slave and the slave master until the master is dead or the slave is free.”²⁴

A trademark of the BPP was also outreach to Chicano militants: “Free the Latino Seven,” they cried,²⁵ while on another occasion they reprinted an excerpt from the embattled “Los Siete de la Raza,” referring to *Basta Ya!* “Our thanks to the Black Panther Party for making this publication possible,”²⁶ they said gratefully.

Still, the presence of Karenga and the fact that both Cleaver and Angela Davis had a presence in the Southland—and George Jackson’s roots were there too—all pointed to the importance of L.A. as a major factor in radical politics nationally. When June Culberson of the Southland Panthers spoke on the “Revolutionary Woman” as her fellow Southland comrade, Raymond “Masai” Hewitt, was addressing “Revolutionary Labor,” it was indicative of this undeniable tendency.²⁷

19. *The Black Panther*, 23 August 1969.

20. *The Black Panther*, 19 May 1969, in Heath, *Black Panther Leaders*, 101.

21. *The Black Panther*, 30 August 1969.

22. *The Black Panther*, 8 August 1969.

23. *Berkeley Barb*, 4 August 1969, and *The Black Panther*, 9 August 1969.

24. *The Black Panther*, 25 May 1969.

25. *The Black Panther*, 28 June 1969.

26. *The Black Panther*, 6 September 1969.

27. *The Black Panther*, 14 May 1969.

Hewitt was rising rapidly in the party hierarchy. Described by Wayne Pharr as possessing a "booming voice," he also had a formidable physicality: "every morning he did fifty push-ups"—he "would do ten and then raise one finger on each hand and do ten more. He'd keep going until he was just on his thumb" while reaching fifty.²⁸

Then there was the January 1969 killing at UCLA of Cleaver's prison compadre "Bunchy" Carter, then a BPP leader in the Southland, and John Huggins, whose widow Ericka Huggins continued his valiancy. The Panthers were explicit: "Pigs plotted murders of L.A. Panthers."²⁹ Minister of Education George Murray was irate: "John's stomach was blown out of his back" while "Bunchy" had his "lungs...blown out through his back."³⁰ Cleaver was distraught since they had known each other from their mutual time in prison and Carter, allegedly, had created the first underground component of the BPP. Assuredly, the L.A. branch was hardly the same after his death.³¹ They had met at Soledad prison in January 1966. "I was a Moslem" then, said Carter, though even then he was being influenced by Fanon.³²

Actually, continued the BPP, "Panthers assassinated by US organization," who were no more than "Pork Chop Nationalists in Los Angeles," suggestive of what the BPP saw as a canard: culturalism or the notion that jettisoning pork from the diet brings us closer to liberation. It was "Pork Chop-ism," they guffawed. They were "as guilty as Cain, as scurvy as Brutus, as low life...and trifling as Judas." Damning them with faint insult, it was felt that "at a casual glance [they] seem comical and even lovable." But working through their "front group," i.e., the "Black Congress," they were "doing the police department's job," citing their role at Locke High School where they were "urging students to adventurous acts

28. Pharr, *Nine Lives*, 124.

29. *The Black Panther*, 15 January 1969. There were aiders and abettors. See statement by Robert Singleton, 5 August 1970, Box 7, Robert Singleton Papers: The "murders," says this Black UCLA professor, were "as much a result of the eternal foot-dragging of the administration" in approving a long-awaited Black Studies curriculum as it was a result of the "volatility of the Black leadership." Carter and Huggins were "recognized successors to the old leadership which failed to deliver on the demands of the Black students at a rate satisfactory to the membership." As early as the Summer of 1960, UCLA brought "fifty high school students who had a history of school disruption" and "were recruited into a summer program" on "Conflict Resolution." January 1969 was a rebuke—perhaps an outgrowth?—of this initiative.

30. *The Black Panther*, 3 March 1969. See also "Deadline Newspaper" of Berkeley, 26 August 1976, Reel 2, Black Panther Documents: Elaine Brown referred to Carter as "brilliant and sensitive." She had moved to L.A. from Philadelphia in 1965 and joined the BPP in April 1968 inspired by the Sacramento manifestation of May 1967. "She moved into a Panther communal home on Century Boulevard [for] nine months." She was there after the January 1969 slayings: "Hundreds of policemen converged on the house...police kicked in the bedroom door, took the baby away [from Ms. Huggins] and arrested the women." By 1970 she was heading to Oakland in order to buttress national leadership, that eventuated in her leading the party.

31. Gifford, *Revolution or Death*, 201.

32. Undated article by Carter, Reel 15, Black Panther Documents.

in front of legions of armed pigs,” and repeating this perfidy at Fremont High School, all the while stuffing “ever increasing federal funds in his [Karenga’s] pocket.” Worse, after the killings of Carter and Huggins, the cops “immediately raided John’s home, arresting 17 Panthers, including John’s wife...[and] her baby girl.” Insultingly, the “baby was released by the pigs in the custody of US.”³³

It had begun raining a short time after the Hugginses’ abode was raided, and the cops, it was reported, “tore the blanket off the Hugginses’ two week old baby” and “insisted on searching [the] infant” and placed the small one “in jail for seven hours.”³⁴

After a few days of investigation, the BPP provided a detailed story about the tragedy. It was Friday, 17 January 1969 at 2:40 p.m. when Huggins was “hit in the back by a .357 Magnum” bullet as a “student dived out a window.” A passerby thought it was “gorilla [*sic*] [guerrilla] theater.” With unusual promptitude the cops arrived within 15 minutes—but an ambulance pulled up at 6 p.m. There was a “power struggle going on over selection of a director to control the new Afro-American Center,” challenging Karenga since this campus was a “source of power” for his group. The Westwood contretemps “can only be understood in the context of the victorious offensive waged by the [BPP] and the BSU at San Francisco State” and the fear this would be duplicated at UCLA. For “whoever directs the program at UCLA will exert powerful influence all over California and earn more than \$20,000 a year.” A “meeting was scheduled for that afternoon with Chancellor [Charles] Young” to “discuss selection of the Black Studies Director. BSU asked Young to cancel the meeting.” Instead, he met with Karenga on Wednesday of the pivotal week. But on Thursday a BPP “faction won” the reins of the BPP and then “opposed the US candidate” for this plum post. Thus, on Friday 150 students and associates attended the fateful meeting. Conveniently, Karenga was in San Diego.³⁵

The ideological sway of the BPP was glimpsed when the *Los Angeles Free Press*—which by the summer of 1970 had a circulation of 100,000³⁶—echoed their analysis, arguing that the tragedy “can only be understood in the context of the victorious offensive waged by the Black Panthers and the BSU at San Francisco State.”³⁷ For even at San Fernando Valley State, students looked north to SFSU and Berkeley for guidance: “They were more or less the vanguard,” said one analyst.³⁸ On cue, as unrest was detonated at Berkeley, walkouts were ignited

33. *The Black Panther*, 25 January 1969.

34. *The Black Panther*, 2 February 1969.

35. *The Black Panther*, 2 February 1969.

36. *People’s World*, 1 August 1970.

37. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 24-31 January 1969.

38. Anthony, *Time of the Furnaces*, 121.

at the sister campuses in Irvine, Riverside, San Diego, Santa Barbara and Los Angeles.³⁹ Fabled scientist Linus Pauling, then at San Diego, called for a strike.⁴⁰

Elaine Brown, eventual chair of the party, later charged that after the assailants fled they jumped into a vehicle of the Pacific Telephone Company and scooted away.⁴¹

Daniel "Skip" Johnson, who became a family therapist, chaired the meeting that devolved into whizzing bullets. Apparently, as students were leaving, a fight broke out between 19-year-old Harold "Tuwala" Jones, who entered tardily, and Huggins. Then Claude "Chuchessa" Hubert intervened and—said Johnson—"Shot John in the back. Then Bunchy tried to take cover behind a chair and [CH] shot through the chair and killed him instantly." And, says Johnson, the authorities were "in some way involved in the supposed escape by Hubert and Jones to Guyana."⁴²

Huggins, it was said, was shot in the lower back and Carter in the chest.⁴³ Sounding quizzical, Karenga told a reporter that "there were 17 shots fire[d] or so I'm told."⁴⁴ By September 1969 three of Karenga's comrades were found guilty of second-degree murder after 24 hours of deliberation, as a local official announced sternly: "Hubert was the killer."⁴⁵

Quickly the killings were portrayed as an outgrowth of tensions between the BPP and Karenga's forces, contributing to a doom loop of mutual recriminations and violence—with the authorities being far from innocent. Ideological warfare ensued with the future dean of the law school at Michigan State University, then known as Linda Harrison, capturing the prevailing sentiment when she said that Karenga "offers no challenge or offense against the prevailing order."⁴⁶ He was the "high priest of psychedelic rhetoric,"⁴⁷ said the BPP organ, adding with flowing sarcasm that he was a "kooky dude," part of a clique of "Black lackey poot-butt [n-word] mercenaries."⁴⁸ From Seattle came the spiky message, "Poor

39. *People's World*, 31 May 1969.

40. Hager, *Force of Nature*, 571.

41. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 19-26 September 1969.

42. Remarks by Daniel Johnson in context of lecture at UCLA, 30 July 2016, Box 7, Robert Singleton Papers. Another source argues that Elaine Brown and a former close friend, "Twala," a Karenga comrade, got into a tiff: She slapped him, and he slapped her, Huggins defended her, and as he drew his pistol "Twala" shot him. Then Carter was shot by another US member, "Hodari." See Faraj, "Unearthing the Underground," 131, 133: ji Jaga suggests that she was an "unsuspecting victim of a CIA mind control program," pointing to her tie to Jay Kennedy, described elsewhere as a CIA asset. Brown was a roommate of "Bobette Azizi Glover" of US: See Scot Brown, *Fighting for US*, 119.

43. *People's World*, 25 January 1969.

44. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 23 January 1969. See also *Los Angeles Free Press*, 31 January-7 February 1969.

45. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 11 September 1969.

46. *The Black Panther*, 2 February 1969.

47. *The Black Panther*, 3 March 1969.

48. *The Black Panther*, 20 April 1969.

people need political power, not daishikis,"⁴⁹ speaking of a growingly popular African-derived smock. (Perhaps contradictorily, Eldridge Cleaver appeared on the front page of the party paper in August 1969—in a daishiki.)⁵⁰

"We must destroy cultural nationalism," said the heterosexual Panther George Murray, since they were no more than "sissies" led by a "bald headed pig named Ron Karenga."⁵¹ Bobby Seale was furious about these "L.A. assassinations," which were "not the first conflict between the Panthers and US." Perpetually, "they were protected by the pigs." As he recalled, "over a year ago a couple of members of US got into an argument with a Black Panther member and they followed him home and as he was going into his house they started shooting at him," and the "Panther drew out his gun and started shooting back." Inside his home, he "continued shooting out the window." Then "neighbors called the police," but the men in blue "stand out behind the cars helping the U.S. [n-words] shoot the man inside his house. Finally, they charged the house and arrested two of the three people inside, the other one escaping." Thus, he concluded disgustedly, speaking derisively of the Karenga forces, "Pork Chops have direct, actual protection," unsurprising since they "come primarily from the middle class bourgeoisie."⁵² Emory Douglas, renowned as the BPP's Minister of Culture, continued this class line by dismissing the "whole of Westwood," site of the conflictual UCLA campus and an upscale venue besides which was "not worth a few organized blocks of the Oakland flatlands," citadel of the working class.⁵³

In partial response, Karenga's forces militarized further,⁵⁴ and standoffs between them and the BPP became normalized. Not helpful to this theoretician was the denunciation of him by the Republic of New Afrika comrades, thought to be part of his ideological circle. Yet he was purged as their Minister of Education because of his inability, it was said, to explain his precise role at the UCLA debacle. He "failed to respond," it was reported.⁵⁵ In return, at Crenshaw High School a teenage Panther was pummeled by Karenga's contingents, as continuing reports of such assaults were regularized.⁵⁶ The man now known as Watani Stiner, a Karenga colleague, was accused of the UCLA tragedy and fled—and blamed "COINTELPRO" of the FBI, their notorious counter-intelligence initiative targeting the CP initially but then ensnaring Black Power groupings. He also suggested that subsequent warfare in L.A. between "Crips" and "Bloods" stemmed ultimately from this initiative.⁵⁷

49. *The Black Panther*, 16 March 1969.

50. *The Black Panther*, 16 August 1969.

51. *The Black Panther*, 3 March 1969.

52. *The Black Panther*, 3 March 1969.

53. *The Black Panther*, 9 March 1969.

54. Scot Brown, *Fighting for US*, 122.

55. *The Black Panther*, 11 May 1969.

56. *People's World*, 1 February 1969.

57. *San Francisco Bay View*, 26 September 2017.

Contrastingly, FBI agent M. Wesley Swearingen has contended that the Stiner brothers, then known as Larry and George, were "FBI Informants" as of January 1969.⁵⁸ Days after the slayings, Larry Stiner reportedly surrendered at the main airport in San Diego with a bullet wound in his shoulder.⁵⁹ Months after the slayings, the Stiners were convicted of robbery, kidnapping, and burglary for purportedly robbing an Orange County motel not far from Disneyland.⁶⁰

Metaphorically, Carter's funeral at Trinity Baptist Church was accompanied by a steady, hard rain.⁶¹ Huggins's funeral was filled to capacity, and Seale seized the opportunity to denigrate "Porkchop Nationalists," shorthand for Karenga's forces. A reporter noticed that "police harassment of the Panthers continued even during the funeral."⁶²

Customarily, the subsequent press coverage was lurid. "Panther's 'Sex Problems'" triggered the tragedy, read one headline. Supposedly, Carter told Huggins that Karenga's men were "'annoying 'his girlfriend'" just before the fireworks; 30 witnesses appeared at the grand jury, including many UCLA students.⁶³ (Some of these students were not in an ideal mood since after the slayings the LAPD was stopping Blacks at random and handcuffing them, according to Robert Singleton, 33, then a campus fixture: he served as both mediator and go-between in talks between the BPP and US and ascertained that the "the shootout was spontaneous."⁶⁴) So motivated, it was soon reported that "undercover fuzz [cops] and federal agents" had flooded the campus in the immediate aftermath of the slayings.⁶⁵

Bookending the bloodshed of early 1969 was the LAPD besieging of the BPP offices later in that tempestuous year. Weeks before the December 1969 raid on the Panthers, Elaine Brown pointed to plate glass windows at the L.A. venue that had been heavily sandbagged in apprehension of an attack, akin to what was then unfolding in Berkeley.⁶⁶ It was Brown whose words were captured by surveillants, as she declaimed the "problems that exist in Los Angeles office because of the arrest of so many brothers.... Masai says the Chief of Staff [Hilliard] has been complaining that he is unable to reach the L.A. staff after hours and Elaine says they don't have any place to live...they can be reached at her mother's...Masai refers to the situation as the 'homeless party.'"⁶⁷

58. Swearingen, *FBI Secrets*, 83. See also *Los Angeles Free Press*, 4-11 July 1969, and Los Angeles Cal., Superior Court Case #A2332011 re: Stiner brothers and Donald Hawkins.

59. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 23 January 1969.

60. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 6 March 1969.

61. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 13 February 1969.

62. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 31 January-7 February 1969.

63. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 20 February 1969.

64. Undated statement by Singleton, Box 7, Robert Singleton Papers.

65. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 2-9 May 1969.

66. *People's World*, 6 September 1969.

67. FBI Report, 11 September 1969, Reel 17, Black Panther Documents.

One mid-September 1969 late afternoon, Hilliard was cited as saying that "Long John called from Los Angeles" carping about "trouble" in that the "office is not being opened on...time, the sisters are not relating to order," meaning that comrades were "practicing the same kind of politics that got Bunchy and John killed.... Long John is going to crack down," which could incite negative rippling.⁶⁸

Months before this December turning point, Wayne Pharr reported a bump in BPP recruitment as "ages ranged from about to eighteen to twenty-three,"⁶⁹ typical of the national trend. Dangerously, a headline shouted that "Panthers open war on LAPD" following the "killing of Walter Pope, Circulation Manager" of the party organ: "rumors are rife."⁷⁰ He was slain on Manchester and a main intersection as the authorities claimed Pope fired shots from an army carbine—before it jammed. In evident retaliation, the site of the party's free breakfast for kids program was invaded, wrecked and looted by the LAPD.⁷¹

This was not unusual, as the authorities, for whatever reason, took violent umbrage at the idea of the BPP feeding children (perhaps sensing that this was an attempt at dual power or that it was exposing the limitations of the state?) Thus, in September 1969, said the party, "L.A. pigs vamp on free breakfast program...armed with shotguns...where 40 to 50 children" were being fed.⁷² This was part of an ongoing assault on the BPP, seeking to crush it. An October 1969 raid on the BPP headquarters involved 12 squad cars and 20 motorcycle cops. For 45 minutes it was a standoff, whetting the authorities' appetite for the December showdown.⁷³

By December 1969, the BPP itself was under murderous assault by the LAPD at its headquarters in South L.A. Unbeknownst to them, the authorities may have had an agent inside the gates in the person of Melvin "Cotton" Smith, compromising the BPP mightily. (Smith may not have joined the authorities until he was detained in Texas months later.) The LAPD might have sought to double-cross him bloodily by insuring that he did not survive this violent encounter.⁷⁴ He could have been deemed to be lumpen personified in that he was said to be a peddler of controlled substances and cultivated a "coke habit" himself. Somehow, he became the BPP liaison with Karenga's group and the authorities too. (Of course, the purveyor of these stories, Louis Tackwood, was a notoriously unreliable narrator, having expressed subtle admiration for Nazis.⁷⁵)

68. FBI Report, 16 September 1969, Reel 17, Black Panther Documents.

69. Pharr, *Nine Lives*, 139.

70. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 8 November 1969.

71. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 25 October 1969.

72. *The Black Panther*, 13 September 1969.

73. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 21 November 1969.

74. Tackwood, *Glasshouse Tapes*, 38.

75. Tackwood, *Glasshouse Tapes*, 102, 105.

Yet their words were echoed to a degree by a reporter for the *Sentinel* who noted that the LAPD “used dynamite, tear gas, handguns and shotguns during the five hour battle” in a “war zone.” There was an attempt to dynamite the roof of the BPP office. There was a “three hour delay in granting a police request to the [U.S.] Army for additional weapons,” which Mayor Yorty deemed to be “intolerable.” Appearing at a local church to object before 300 locals was a lineup that included Franklin Alexander, Mervyn Dymally, John Mack of the Urban League, and the Reverend H.H. Brookins. Even after the bullets stopped whizzing, cops continued to “club the handcuffed youth.” A *Sentinel* columnist said he saw police “stepping on a fallen women...people on the scene felt nose irritation, eye watering and sneezing.” This was occurring as “taunting...from the youth [was] constant.” Then “rain started to fall about 3 P.M.,” dampening spirits on all sides. An age gap, which was to define the epoch, asserted itself in that “adults were less hostile” toward the authorities than the youthful.⁷⁶

Still, the BPP were prepared as they faced off with 300 armed agents of the state, as suggested when one of the latter shouted startlingly, “They’re shooting back,” an epigraph for an era. That they did, according to Wayne Pharr, who was inside the bullet-scarred headquarters. Like the late “Bunchy” Carter, the BPP chapter was marked indelibly by a group referred to as a “gang,” speaking of the “Slausons,” which had various branches and generally came from an embattled five-mile radius from Manchester Boulevard north to Slauson Avenue and from Figueroa Avenue to Compton Boulevard East, said Pharr. Karenga’s forces, he said, were shaped by their peers, known as the “Gladiators,” with a base at 54th and Vermont, Manual Arts High School.⁷⁷ The Negro police agent Louis Tackwood maintained that like the BPP itself, white supremacy had driven these groups into being, for example, the “Spook Hunters” which “on the back of their jacket” was a “white man standing on a [N-word’s] head.” Defensively, Blacks began to organize and soon there were the “Slausons,” known to be “sharp dressers...their old ladies were good looking too” and affiliates: “Little Slausons, Baby Slausons...Slausonettes,” Renegade Slausons, et al.⁷⁸

(One did not have to be in a “gang” in order to absorb blows: Pharr suffered a forehead wound during the shootout and like Roland Freeman had to be treated at the county hospital.)⁷⁹

Carter was given credit for organizing the first party chapter beyond the Bay Area in early 1968. He was the driving force after a four-year tenure at Soledad, where he was, for a while, a Muslim, then met and befriended Cleaver and studied

77. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 11 December 1969.

78. Pharr, *Nine Lives*, 2014.

79. Tackwood, *Glasshouse Tapes*, 81.

80. *The Black Panther*, 13 December 1969.

Fanon.⁸⁰ Tellingly, even after his slaying in January, his example was still being felt in December 1969.

Even the *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, ideologically questionable, spoke disparagingly of how “[Mayor] Yorty’s Storm Troopers open warfare on Blacks.... 1000 Yorty police shoot up Black community” armed with “tanks, helmets, armor, battering rams and poisonous gas.” Yet Party headquarters featured “reinforced door jams, heavily screened windows, a secret tunnel and the sandbags.” Plaintively, the reporter asked in light of this multi-pronged offensive, “Are Black people denied the right to arm themselves....”⁸¹ They thought not. How could they think otherwise when they spotted “windows shot out, its brick scarred and ripped by lead slugs”; opening the eyes of this usually anti-BPP source was possibly the gas stinging his eyes, which also “bit and stung my exposed skin.” His friend, Julian Sampsey, “sells used refrigerators. He was holding a wounded upper right arm”—not a Panther, mind you. “Tears were running down both of our faces” as the “gas was bad” inducing “nausea.” The entire episode was “dastardly,” concluded their furious editorial. It was “designated to create another Watts Riot,” a “conspiracy to create bias and anti-Negro riots.” Then they posed a question that demanded an answer: “when have the police broken down the doors and shot up the buildings of the KKK.”⁸²

It was left to the BPP itself to provide the most dramatic account. It was 5 a.m., when 24 cadre were arrested after a futile attempt to “wipe out the Black Panther Party in Los Angeles.” A warrant for arrest was outstanding for Pratt and Paul Redd. The Walter Pope Community Center at 1100½ Exposition had been the scene of tear gassing and a “brutal beating of four Panthers” that “left one brother minus his teeth.” But what “topped all this” was the assault on the “Central Headquarters at 4115 South Central,” initiated by “approximately 400 pigs” with “tear gas, shotguns, revolvers, high powered rifles, grenade launchers and even a tank was kept in waiting.” Witness Larry Haun spoke of “thousands of gunshots” and reported that “two Black girls and one young Black man” were “knocked down and clubbed repeatedly with nightsticks and hundreds of white policemen in an all Black community” were berated. The battle lasted for five hours until 10:15 a.m. and “left the pigs a bit shaken,” since “three” were wounded, “one...critically.” The BPP “sustained minimal injuries, as only three people were wounded (none critically).” Importantly, the “people”—amassed onlookers—“witnessed an excellent lesson in political education that day.” Chillingly, “the pigs had started to bring in their tank and were setting detonating charges to the building” when hostilities halted abruptly. The “Black Panther Party,” it was

81. *The Black Panther*, 17 October 1970.

82. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 20 December 1969.

83. *Los Angeles-Herald-Dispatch*, 20 December 1969.

announced proudly, "has once again demonstrated that it is the vanguard of the struggle."⁸³

Robert Bryan spoke movingly of how nine young men and two young women defended themselves as they were "awakened by machine gun fire." But that was only the beginning as the cops, apparently sore because a massacre did not occur, then began to "beat people in the Black community" to restore deterrence, said the BPP. Standing tall, the community turned out again, this time to clean up the mess; "400 people from the community and Mother Country radicals [Euro-Americans]" worked together to this end. They could do little to fix the "holes the pigs had blown into the ceiling," some the residue of "tear gas bombs" tossed "every two hours" inducing "nausea and lightheadedness." All the while comrades were on the street selling the party newspaper, leading to their detention including for jaywalking. A "pig helicopter flew back and forth" surveilling, perhaps spotting the beating of pregnant women, all of which was "treated by almost all news media as wholly justified." Geronimo ji Jaga, the architect of the defense, was at 55th street, though bullets still flew over his head. It was, said the BPP, "one of the most outlandish and vicious attacks ever laid upon people not engaged in declared war," as the comrades "survived an attack as heavy as any in Vietnam."⁸⁴ At 1100½ W. Exposition Boulevard, Craig Williams, Sharon Williams, Kathy Kimbrough and Isaiah Houston were detained.⁸⁵

So outraged, thousands rallied at City Hall in protest.⁸⁶ "Free the L.A. 18," speaking of the detained comrades, arose as the new cry.⁸⁷ This was at the behest of the BPP which called for a "General Strike" and mass rally at noon on Thursday, 11 December to "protest and denounce the continuing invasion" and "attack," meaning "not reporting to school...not attending school...closing all businesses."⁸⁸

The authorities engaged in a kind of collective punishment as even Negro journalists—including one from the dubious *Herald-Dispatch*—were swept up in the dragnet. He was held incommunicado since he had BPP literature in his possession, while film of the attack was seized. Even newly elected U.S. Sen.

84. *The Black Panther*, 13 December 1969.

85. *The Black Panther*, 20 December 1969. See also Letter from Robert Bryan, 20 December 1969, Reel 2, Black Panther Documents.

86. Faraj, "Unearthing the Underground," 139.

87. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 18 December 1969. 6000 were present: *Los Angeles Free Press*, 19-24 December 1969.

88. *The Black Panther*, 27 December 1969. Among the defendants were Wayne Pharr, Albert Armour, Roland Freeman, Tommye Williams, Paul Redd, Renee Moore, Robert Bryan, Jackie Johnson, Lloyd Mimms, Gilbert Parker, Bernard Smith, Melvin Smith and Willie Stafford. Faraj, "Unearthing the Underground," 138-139.

89. *The Black Panther*, 13 December 1969.

Alan Cranston wondered about the legitimacy of deploying tanks in a densely populated environment.⁸⁹

Sen. Cranston may have noticed that as the authorities were gathering for this siege, those in the surrounding community began showering them with brickbats and the like, as they expressed their support for the party. It "sounded like World War II," was the observation when gunfire erupted from the cops. The senator may have read the line in the *Los Angeles Free Press*: "Panther support in the L.A. Black community has literally exploded."⁹⁰ Cranston may also have perceived a development ultimately serious for national security. "Raid binds G.I. radicals to Panthers" was one reportorial summary of an ongoing trend: "There was a hard core group of about 75 each among both the San Diego sailors and the Pendleton Marines,"⁹¹ a potential source for weaponry and militant solidarity besides. "G.I.s free" blared the BPP, speaking of gratuitous admission to an upcoming event—others would be charged 25 cents. "Our fight is not in Vietnam,"⁹² they advised sagely. Then 45 military men from Camp Pendleton came to the free breakfast for kids site and all were serenaded by Booker White, denoted by the BPP as "one of the few remaining Black folksingers in the country."⁹³ Sufficiently inspired, some Marines then sought to open their own site for victuals, dubbed a coffeehouse.⁹⁴ Contemporaneously, an insurrection was detonated at the brig at Camp Pendleton.⁹⁵

Not accidentally, as the BPP surged, so did Black sailors and soldiers,⁹⁶ who then inspired others of like mind,⁹⁷ complicating the execution of U.S. foreign policy, especially in Vietnam. Soon Panthers were driving to Fort Ord, up the coast, seeking weapons from disgruntled soldiers.⁹⁸

The impact of this armed struggle in the streets was so electrifying that one journalist wondered if the "bullet ridden Panther headquarters" was fated to be "the new Mecca,"⁹⁹ a site of pilgrimage for future generations.

Panthers likely were not surprised by this murderous turn of events, otherwise, they would not have been so well prepared for it. They paid attention when there were "L.A. Gestapo attacks on anti-war demonstrators" in July 1967, followed by the arrest of three comrades—Earl Anthony, Reggie Portier and

⁸⁹⁰. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 27 December 1969.

⁸⁹¹. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 12-19 December 1969.

⁸⁹². *Los Angeles Free Press*, 12-19 December 1969.

⁸⁹³. *The Black Panther*, 20 September 1969.

⁸⁹⁴. *The Black Panther*, 22 November 1969.

⁸⁹⁵. *The Black Panther*, 6 December 1969.

⁸⁹⁶. *Los Angeles Free-Press*, 26 September-2 October 1969.

⁸⁹⁷. "The Case of GIs United Against the War in Vietnam, Fort Jackson, South Carolina," 20 March 1969, GI Civil Liberties Defense Committee, University of Massachusetts-Amherst.

⁸⁹⁸. *Los Angeles Times*, 29 November 1969.

⁸⁹⁹. Pharr, *Nine Lives*, 130.

¹¹⁰⁰. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 18 December 1969.

Bobby Hutton.¹⁰⁰ "Gestapo" was their favored epithet for the "Los Angeles pigs" or police,¹⁰¹ who as early as September 1968 were said to have "plotted murder of L.A. Panthers."¹⁰² By October 1968 the plot was consummated: "3 Panthers murdered by Los Angeles police" accompanied by a "brutal cop attack on Watts Festival."¹⁰³ Then in November 1968 "Black brothers [again were] killed by Los Angeles pigs," it was reported.¹⁰⁴

Weeks before his tragic killing, John Huggins, listed as Deputy Minister of Information for the BPP in L.A., wrote an "open letter to L.A. Pig Chief" rebuking "your own Pig Force after the bombing of the Long Beach SDS [Students for a Democratic Society] and [the] Peace and Freedom [Party]."¹⁰⁵

Days after the turning point of December 1969, LAPD raided the headquarters of Karenga, albeit with differing results. Two were arrested but, said an observer, there was "no shooting, no violence," though "several containers of ammunition were found along with gas masks, sling shots and a cross bow" along with various "guns" and "alleged pipe bombs."¹⁰⁶

Coincidentally or not, Karenga became even more prominent after the UCLA killings. The *Sentinel*, seemingly charmed, spoke of him breathlessly as "head of the most talked about activist group in the history of Los Angeles." As the reporter looked on wondrously, "sounds of modern jazz filters through from the next room." The balding, pudgy guru blamed his problems on "left wing organizations," and went on "attacking the concept of Communism." Karl Marx himself was derided as a "madman" as he contended that Panthers were harmed by their relationship with the left-leaning Peace & Freedom Party. As for himself, he deftly evaded the query of his purportedly working for the demagogic Mayer Yorty.¹⁰⁷ When the fiery Black writer from Newark—then known as Le Roi Jones—arrived at the Black Congress office at 72nd and Broadway to lecture, Karenga embraced him warmly, and the New Jerseyan was described as leading the "US organization on the eastern seaboard."¹⁰⁸

Yet while it was around, the Black Congress which brought together at various points the NAACP, CORE, the BPP, the Republic of New Afrika and the Nation of Islam, resided in a medium-sized two-story stucco building with a brick foundation; small rooms were used as offices and larger rooms for meetings and classes.¹⁰⁹ During its brief existence, the BC was able to make a contribution.

101. *The Black Panther*, 20 July 1967.

102. *The Black Panther*, 10 June 1968.

103. *The Black Panther*, 7 September 1968.

104. *The Black Panther*, 12 October 1968.

105. *The Black Panther*, 16 November 1968.

106. *The Black Panther*, 16 November 1968.

107. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 15 January 1970.

108. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 6 March 1969.

109. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 10 July 1969.

110. Pharr, *Nine Lives*, 107.

Angela Davis, then commuting to L.A. regularly from La Jolla, recalled that “our three mimeograph machines” there “were rolling twenty fours a day, printing the leaflets to be distributed by hundreds of high school students,”¹¹⁰ who then streamed out of the classrooms and into the streets in protest.

Jones had plunged into a beehive. The BPP even went as far as reprinting an article from the customarily conservative *Wall Street Journal*, praising Karenga, the “fourteenth child in a family of a poor Baptist Minister,” then 26, who “has appeared on the same program with McGeorge Bundy of the Ford Foundation” at ivied sites like Yale. After Dr. King’s assassination, he “slipped into Sacramento for a private chat with Governor Ronald Reagan at the governor’s request” and also met clandestinely with [LAPD] Chief Thomas Reddin after [Dr.] King was killed.”¹¹¹ By the early summer of 1966 Karenga was “on the cover of *Life* magazine.” He was “not a street brother,” a status the BPP cherished, but—scornfully—“an intellectual.”¹¹²

The Congress itself was torn by internecine conflict. Shortly after the UCLA slayings, their leader, Walter Bremond, 35, resigned.¹¹³ Yet months later his home was firebombed with a combination of kerosene and sulfurous acid. “He stated that Karenga had been angry with him,” according to a journalist, though adding quickly, “It could have been Karenga or the Panthers or some white racists,” a troubling lineup of suspects, reflective of how settling disputes by any means necessary had become standard praxis. Bremond opined disturbingly that “we are fast developing a kind of fascist or Nazi atmosphere in the Black community.”¹¹⁴

Negro columnist Booker Griffin was of like mind. “For the past year,” he said in late October 1969, “para-military assaults of Blacks upon Blacks have been a living reality in this country.” He then referred to a recent community confab that led to a “broad and direct statement condemning Ron Karenga...as a threat to the community.” Bremond was part of the problem in that he was “tied to...‘the Poverty Black Power Resource Establishment’” and “Karenga has been an ally of that establishment,” flush with dollars from foundations and government alike busily throwing funds at deep-seated problems. But now the “poverty establishment is trying to freeze Karenga out,” heightening conflict.¹¹⁵ As the BPP put it, “Bremond is operating a string of gas stations in the ghetto for Standard Oil and the Bank of America and that both Bremond and Karenga are to be major beneficiaries of the United Brotherhood Crusade...both are members of the Community Advisory Council to help plan UCLA’s new Afro-American Studies Center,” with potentially lucrative spinoff contracts. Both accused the “Stiner

111. Angela Davis, *An Autobiography*, Chicago: Haymarket, 2021, 154.

112. *The Black Panther*, 2 February 1969.

113. *The Black Panther*, 2 February 1969.

114. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 30 January 1969.

115. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 23 October 1969.

116. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 30 October 1969.

brothers” in the January 1969 slayings, for on campus were “UCLA students and US members.”¹¹⁶

Ominously, it was unclear if Griffin was referring to Karenga’s colleagues when he asserted that the BPP was “not the most armed group in the Black community.”¹¹⁷ Whatever the case, Karenga had certain advantages, for example his apparent fluency in Spanish.¹¹⁸ When BPP cadre David Hilliard, Landon Williams and George Murray were detained in Mexico City en route to Cuba, only the latter could communicate in Spanish.¹¹⁹

Already, Cuba’s prominence within the BPP was rising—which should have mandated diplomatic delicacy. Reputedly, as early as July 1968 Seale and Cleaver had discussed guerrilla training aided by Havana with their emissaries at the United Nations,¹²⁰ which should have prompted a hellbent attempt to gain fluency in the language of Cervantes.

Irrespective of Karenga’s complicity in the UCLA deaths, low-to-high intensity conflict erupted between his forces and the BPP. Days later nine of Karenga’s toughs attacked 16-year-old Douglas Greenwood as he was selling party periodicals at Crenshaw High School.¹²¹ A similar incident occurred at Jefferson and Central at a filling station as US members assaulted “Masai” Hewitt and stole his party newspapers. Then on 3 February at the county courthouse at 110 Grand, Panther Roger Lewis was on the 7th floor when he was accosted by these same ideological foes deploying expert karate maneuvers; according to an observant reporter, “policemen ignored the US members but told the two Panthers to leave.”¹²²

The authorities leaned hard against the BPP: Days later Michael Pennywell, 23, second in command, it was said, of the L.A. Panthers, was convicted for purportedly using the word “fuck” and “motherfuck[er]” in a bar at 62nd and Western, receiving a 90-day jail sentence and a \$200 fine.¹²³

By March 1969 Ronald Freeman of the BPP was shot; he was said to have been present at UCLA and wound up being charged with possession of firearms and explosives.¹²⁴ Then another shooting of Panthers occurred near Victory Baptist Church, with a Karenga man said to be the triggerman and the BPP’s Greg Everett thought to be targeted.¹²⁵

117. *The Black Panther*, 2 February 1969.

118. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 11 December 1969.

119. *The Black Panther*, 10 June 1968.

120. *The Black Panther*, 5 October 1968.

121. Gifford, *Revolution or Death*, 168.

122. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 31 January-7 February 1969.

123. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 7-13 February 1969.

124. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 28 February-6 March 1969.

125. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 20 March 1969.

126. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 21-28 March 1969.

By May 1969 two motorcycle cops stopped John Washington's car in front of the BPP office at 1810 East 103rd Street.¹²⁶ By November 1969—once again—"Pigs [ran] amuck in L.A." as Washington, known as Long John," and his comrade Michael Pennywell were "vamped on by fascist pigs from the [notorious] 77th [precinct]," i.e., "beaten."¹²⁷

By May 1969 a San Diego Panther was slain—as the BPP put it—"by pork chop pigs" at 30th and Imperial Avenue. These "freaks" callously "jammed a .38 automatic into the back of his neck and murdered him." This followed in the wake of the UCLA incident when Karenga's men "forcibly entered the [BPP] office, 14 strong with guns drawn."¹²⁸ By August 1969 a report appeared that an "'US' member shot Panther in back" with "another killing in San Diego making four to date." The accused Claude Hubert was under indictment but still on the lam.¹²⁹

Taking notice was the journalist then known as Earl Ofari, who reported that a group called "Black Alternative," a "new community group," had assayed the evidence and found Karenga "guilty." It was part of a tribunal that included SNCC and, yes, the BPP, that also assailed the Black Congress (said to encompass 50 organizations).¹³⁰

Before it went belly up, Ken Neomange of the Black Congress uttered their ideal: "We don't recognize classes of people,"¹³¹ which had a certain logic given the sweeping nature of police terror yet painted over many other issues with too broad a brush and ironically mimicked the class collaboration that inhered in settler colonialism.

It was the then youthful Ofari who captured the attitude of many when he opined that "Black Nationalism" as embodied by Karenga represented "Cultural Nationalism's failure to comprehend adequately the scope of U.S. imperialism.... Cultural Nationalism, as it is presently defined ideologically must be opposed."¹³²

Ofari also lanced the Black Congress, which "established a variety of relationships with various business interests," that included the "Sons of Watts" and the Watts Labor Community Action Committee," all beneficiaries of the "aid of the Standard Oil Company." It was SOW which received a lease on a filling station in a sign of an emerging "Ghetto Imperialism."¹³³ (Writer Louise Meriwether was unimpressed, rapping Ofari's "sophomoric...slurs" redolent of "his own personal hang-ups."¹³⁴)

127. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 9-16 May 1969.

128. *The Black Panther*, 9 November 1969.

129. *The Black Panther*, 23 May 1969.

130. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 21 August 1969.

131. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 7-14 March 1969.

132. Undated statement, Part VI, Box C76, NAACP Papers-LC.

133. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 14-21 March 1969.

134. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 25 February 1969.

135. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 20 June 1969.

The BPP periodical was ambivalent about the "Black Capitalist" then ascending, pointing to an enterprise "located at 4350 Adams Blvd." where merchandise included "daishikis, Afro art, monkeys, posters"—even the very same party paper.¹³⁵

Again, this was an aspect of an ideological hegemony that the BPP then enjoyed, for Ofari sounded then like Seale, whose dissection of Karenga was unparalleled. On one occasion, he did so after a stint on the drums. Then his comrade Hewitt took to the microphone and juxtaposed "armed revolution" with the presumed weak tea that was "cultural nationalism."¹³⁶

Karenga struck back deriding the "slogan 'pick up the gun'" as mere empty verbiage, "not a program or an ideology," said the portly philosopher who quoted Mao Zedong at length, turning the tables. It was US, his grouping, which was truly the "Revolutionary Party."¹³⁷

Actually, the searing inflammation was wider than simply Karenga vs. the BPP. By September 1969 a revolt was detonated in Riverside, due east of L.A. It was sited on the predominantly Black eastside of town and 17 cops were hurt, three seriously. Again, police misconduct was the trigger as they undiplomatically sought to break up a fight with teargas. A car was overturned and burned; snipers and arsonists abounded.¹³⁸ Then in a token of a proliferating internal conflict, Nathaniel Clark, 19, was shot and killed; this Panther, according to the BPP speaking tactlessly, was "killed by a selfish counterrevolutionary [b-word] who claimed to be his wife but didn't want to relate to the Party.... she preferred to kill him."¹³⁹

Then J. Edgar Hoover of the FBI put his finger on the scales when he described the BPP as the "greatest threat to internal security in the country," not least since they were schooled in the "Marxist-Leninist ideology and the teachings of...Mao [Zedong]."¹⁴⁰

This ideology prompted the BPP toward "moves internationally," according to their periodical, as they took the "Free Huey" crusade to the United Nations, pricking the Achilles heel of U.S. imperialism: its vulnerability in the global arena.¹⁴¹ From behind bars, Newton called on his party to demand that "U.N. observer troops" be posted in Black communities to protect the besieged from

136. *The Black Panther*, 28 June 1969: This report was signed by "Brother Bruce...Sister Anna Mae Wilson, Sister Phyllis Jones, Brother Samuel Pierson."

137. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 18 April 1969.

138. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 9-16 May 1969.

139. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 25 September 1969.

140. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 19-26 September 1969.

141. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 17 July 1969.

142. *The Black Panther*, 14 September 1968.

bloodthirsty cops.¹⁴² Promptly, eight Panthers were arrested in L.A. on suspicion of conspiring to kill cops—then released.¹⁴³

Yet even then the BPP was betraying the ideological tendencies that would sabotage their admirable venture. As early as March 1969 the BPP was berating the “Washington/Moscow collaboration” which had “intensified” spearheaded by a “clique of Soviet revisionist renegades” among the “two most ferocious enemies of the revolutionary people of the world.”¹⁴⁴ Congruently, Mao Zedong was placed prominently on the front page of their periodical.¹⁴⁵ The BPP, with its hands full confronting U.S. imperialism, suggested that it would simultaneously seek to confront Moscow: “We will never allow Soviet Revisionists to invade and occupy China’s sacred territory” as “Russia-U.S. conspire to trick China into war”: There were three whole pages on this in their newspaper.¹⁴⁶

This piffle was undesigned to appeal to potential comrades in Cuba, then being subsidized by this “clique,” nor African liberation movements in the same category.¹⁴⁷ It was a response, however, to a felt need by some to distance themselves from “white” Moscow, while surrendering to a pervasive anti-Sovietism and glomming on to a presumed fresh and new “revolutionary” model in China.

Nonetheless, the BPP should be given credit for soaring far beyond their non-Communist peers in aligning with revolutionaries worldwide. This included “our brother Rudi Dutschke, organizer of West German SDS [*sic*]”, a Marcuse comrade featured in an issue of their paper that had Mexico’s national hero, Emiliano Zapata, on the cover.¹⁴⁸

By late March 1969 Seale, along with L.A.’s “Masai” Hewitt, had returned from Scandinavia, after a speaking tour in Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland. While there the comrades conferred with delegations from Cuba, China, Vietnam, etc. They addressed former Black soldiers then in exile in Copenhagen, though these “deserters were filled up with CIA agents,” along with “big pigs and little pigs and damn fools and lunatics.” Apparently, they were warmly received nonetheless as they “extended” their tour and “educated thousands.”¹⁴⁹ At a raucous “Free Huey” demonstration in Sweden, Connie Matthews spoke, the prelude to the formation of a solidarity committee.¹⁵⁰ The BPP newspaper had 35,000 subscribers in Sweden, Copenhagen, Paris, England, Japan and Kenya,

143. *The Black Panther*, 28 September 1968.

144. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 7 August 1969.

145. *The Black Panther*, 3 March 1969.

146. *The Black Panther*, 16 March 1969.

147. *The Black Panther*, 23 March 1969.

148. See Gerald Horne, *Race to Revolution: The U.S. and Cuba during Slavery and Jim Crow*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 2014; and Horne, *White Supremacy Confronted*.

149. *The Black Panther*, 9 March 1969.

150. *The Black Panther*, 31 March 1969.

151. *The Black Panther*, 21 June 1969.

and this journey ineluctably added to this growing list, which already included about 20,000 in Chicago and 30,000 in New York City—according to Seale.¹⁵¹

Their conversations with the Vietnamese were a prelude to Cleaver calling for these comrades to arrange a prisoner exchange with U.S. soldiers being traded for Black inmates.¹⁵² By late 1969 Seale argued that “23 members” of his party had been “killed now,” with “40 or 50 political prisoners” tied to the BPP.¹⁵³

This militancy was greeted predictively by the state. Once Hewitt noticed that the “pigs” were “following us.” Carmichael, still the Prime Minister of the BPP, though not for long, “had been there a month before us and confused things.” For they “talked with many brothers from Africa” while there, “brothers who were actively involved in revolutionary struggles...trying as they can to get into Marxism-Leninism.” Consistent with the BPP hegemonic line, he assailed “most of the cats that propagate Black Nationalism in the street” since they “practice integration between the sheets.” He favored a “class struggle not a race struggle”: “we have a profound love for Fidel Castro,” for example. As for the counterculture, he was dismissive: “I don’t think that psychedelic trips kill pigs.”¹⁵⁴

Armed struggle had arrived. On the one hand, this was a delayed reaction to centuries of enslavement and apartheid, backed by the state. The latter had been pursuing armed policies all along, but now the intended victims were “shooting back” in organized form. A problem was the day after: Legal and mass defense that could have been aided substantially by the likes of William Patterson, who created the template in the 1930s by dint of the global campaign to free the Scottsboro 9, soon was being excoriated by BPP titans. Exile to Cuba was blunted because of one diplomatic faux pas after another. Exile to Algeria—soon to greet Cleaver—blunted too, though he remained sufficiently competent and wise to keep one step ahead of Washington to stay in the good graces of Algiers. Still, the BPP was sagacious enough to welcome legal assistance from Leo Branton—soon to star in the defense of Angela Davis—who had earned his spurs during the long-ago Smith Act trials of the early 1950s: He also became a “mentor” to Johnny Cochran, who rescued BPP principal Elmer “Geronimo” Pratt from the gallows: *geronimo ji Jaga*, as he came to be called, had made 64 combat jumps before he

152. Seale, *A Lonely Rage*, 175. These figures seem to be inflated.

153. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 7 November 1969.

154. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 28 November 1969.

155. *The Black Panther*, 31 May 1969. Angela Davis recalls Carmichael at a Panther rally speaking of socialism as “the white man’s thing,” with which she took umbrage. Angela Davis, *Autobiography*.

145. CPUSA Chairman Henry Winston also criticized him: See Report to National Negro Affairs Commission, 18-19 May 1968, Box 153, CPUSA Records-NYU: His polemic assailed this leader for assuming that Negroes in the U.S. were a colony. See also Winston, *Strategy for a Black Agenda: A Critique of New Theories of Liberation in the United States and Africa*, New York: International, 1973. See also *The Black Panther*, 16 March 1968: Carmichael listed as Prime Minister of the BPP but the 31 May 1969 edition reports that Hewitt was investigating his “deviations.”

was 19 while in the U.S. military, earning a Purple Heart, and was the strategist who made sure the BPP survived 5000 police rounds, most of them harmlessly striking the sandbags he had assembled—they even survived a dynamite charge dropped from a helicopter.¹⁵⁵

It was the skilled ji Jaga, says his comrade Pete O'Neal—who found exile with him in Tanzania—who was the “Field Marshal in charge of the underground nationally.”¹⁵⁶ According to Panther Wayne Pharr, a man known as “Captain Franco” had served as leader of the L.A. underground, but it was feared he was a snitch, which led to his premature demise.¹⁵⁷ He received a “bullet through his brain,” said Angela Davis.¹⁵⁸ Carter’s loss was notably harmful since his group—the “Wolves”—were said to carry out underground operations in L.A.¹⁵⁹

Carter’s influence was also felt in the recollections of the former Linda Miles, then known as Talibah Shakir. “We learned different forms of medical treatments, we learned how to use various types of guns...how to break them down, how to clean them.” She was not yet 17 then and most of her comrades “were in their 20s.” She was present in December 1969: “it was like all out war that day...they were shootin’...as if they were in a war with another country,” as all-too-true remembrance. She felt the intensity more than most since Paul Redd, one of the combatants, “became my husband” and wound-up spending 44 years of his 65-year lifespan in prison.¹⁶⁰

The angst she felt was magnified by the downstream consequences. For it was not only Southland Panthers who were arming. In New York, Jamal Joseph—whose father was a Communist who fought alongside Fidel Castro and Che Guevara in Cuba—was to be found in a BPP safehouse at the tender age of 15 where he learned the ins and outs of handling an M16 assault rifle—and, he recalled, a “.45 caliber pistol, a 12 gauge shotgun and an M1 carbine.” It is true that as in L.A., these weapons were turned against oppressors, but it is also true that as cleavages deepened internally between and amongst comrades, “New York and California Panthers” were “ready to shoot it out” as an “East Coast/West Coast split” manifested,¹⁶¹ ostensibly masking a larger conflict: a Cleaver/Newton split stemming from the former’s exile in Algiers and the outlook then adopted. Matters were not helped, said the FBI, when “Evon Lana Anderson” of L.A.,

156. Olsen, *Last Man Standing*, 32, 61.

157. Magnarella, *Black Panther in Exile*, 53.

158. Pharr, *Nine Lives*, 103.

159. Angela Davis, *Autobiography*, 168.

160. Faraj, “Unearthing the Underground,” 126.

161. Interview with Talibah Shakir, formerly known as Linda Miles, in Chimurenga, *Some of Us Are Brave*, 350-362, 354, 355. Her comrade ji Jaga recounts “one example of a Panther who ‘used to shoot people in the leg with a .22 just so the women could get practice dressing bullet wounds.’” See also Faraj, “Unearthing the Underground,” 127. See letter from Redd, *The Black Panther*, 21 March 1970.

162. Jamal Joseph, *Panther Baby: A Life of Rebellion and Reinvention*, Chapel Hill: Algonquin, 2012, 219, 1, 187.

"Secretary in Charge of Propaganda," was sent to New Haven in the midst of a controversial trial, as that city was "becoming [a] new center" for activism.¹⁶²

It was left to the increasingly popular Black elected official, Trinidad-born Mervyn Dymally, to conduct the most comprehensive analysis of the siege of December 1969. "It is my estimate," he began, "that there were more police there surrounding that one headquarters than there were during the entire Watts Riot," adding "this is part of a national plot to eliminate the Panthers and there needs to be a national voice to speak out against this repression." Given his stature, he was able to communicate this powerful message globally through BBC radio. "We went on top of the roof across the street from the Panthers' headquarters" and found "dozens of cigarette butts," leading to the inference that the "police had been there for weeks and weeks." Besides, he was insulted that he—a State Senator—and "identifying himself" as such "was refused permission" to gain access during the assault. Afterward, Senator Dymally returned and for his troubles a cop "swung and I got hit right above my left eye and as I turned around it seemed as if hundreds of police were on me and I got hit on the back of my head." This was a kind of collective punishment being inflicted, critical to the legacy of Black Americans.

Resultingly "merging to support the Panthers were groups of all different philosophical and class shades," including the NAACP, Urban League, CORE, SCLC at a mass rally at City Hall. He realized that "when the police get ready to strike, there are no class differences among Blacks." Yet his fellow Black elected officials were scrambling for opportunist advantage: an aide to Billy Mills for one, and Lin Hilburn, City Councilman Gil Lindsay's "Field Representative"—Hilburn "incidentally a candidate against me"—and Warren Hollier, chief aide to mayoral hopeful Tom Bradley. Dymally was critical of this future mayor who took a "strange position," assuming anticommunist stances, the "same position that Mayor Yorty took against him." Yet the overall trend was positive in that the raid "united the Black Elected Officials as they have never been united before," as the Panthers "injected a new dimension in politics," to be frittered away by Cleaver-like ultra-leftist attacks on these allies. Their "breakfast program" was "popular," forcing the state to seek to emulate it: "a result of the Panther breakfast program" meant that "I was influenced to introduce the legislation in the Senate to provide free breakfasts for children."¹⁶³ Or as the Panthers stressed, "THE YOUTH WE ARE FEEDING WILL SURELY FEED THE REVOLUTION."¹⁶⁴ The amply fed children, they declared, "wear our buttons and ask about the daily paper."¹⁶⁵

163. FBI Memorandum, 3 April 1970, Box 19, White House Special Files, SMOF, John Ehrlichman Papers-RNPL.

164. Undated report, ca. 1969-1970, Mervyn Dymally Papers.

165. *The Black Panther*, 14 June 1969.

166. *The Black Panther*, 29 April 1969.

The *Los Angeles Free Press* was energized by the siege and the militant example demonstrated by the BPP, claiming that "eleven men and women" were "holding off over 300 police armed with...machine guns, chemical weapons, helicopters and plastic explosives...under the leadership of the Panthers and the Che-Lumumba club" of the CP.¹⁶⁶

If future police chief Daryl Gates is to be believed, the authorities drew opposing inferences from the December 1969 turmoil. The LAPD were no novices in surveillance and dirty tricks, though earlier their focus had been on the CP and their liaison, Carl Abbott, had spent time in the Soviet Union. But after Watts 1965 they shifted, he said, and "began reading everything we could get our hands on concerning guerrilla warfare" and "attended several Marine sessions" on this complicated topic, as if they were in Indochina, as they began "trading expertise" with these leathernecks. They "put together...highly trained anti-sniper teams" as a result. Rather immodestly, Gates announced that "I became known as the 'Father of SWAT'"—Special Weapons and Tactics—the bane of the BPP. "We kept our training operations secret for years," and "sent squads to train at Camp Pendleton," where the BPP, not coincidentally, was recruiting. Hollywood helped too, as Universal Studios in Burbank lent the cops a "back lot," a "ready made training center" for their campaign. Thus, in December 1969 cops felt prepared with their 40-man assault team and 16 SWAT men, thinking the siege might last "five, ten minutes" maximally. Instead, they were greeted—he claimed—with "bombs, hand grenades and...Thompson submachine guns." The rattled Gates then "called the Marines at Camp Pendleton" for backup, including a grenade launcher, while Mayor Yorty—"the best mayor the city has ever had"—hurriedly called the Pentagon, as if this were a firefight in Vietnam.¹⁶⁷

Gates's response was exemplary of the counter-offensive by the state. In San Diego, Howard Berry Godfrey attained notoriety in his burglarizing expeditions on behalf of the authorities. From 1969 to the spring of 1970 there were 862 bombings in the U.S., by one estimate—but, says a study of COINTELPRO—the "majority entailed the direct involvement of FBI and local police [provocateurs]."¹⁶⁸

* * *

The BPP had arrived in the Southland with a bang, the February 1968 Sports Arena affair being the high water mark in that this local chapter carried national

¹⁶⁷. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 19-24 December 1969.

¹⁶⁸. Daryl F. Gates with Diane K. Shah, *Chief: My Life in the LAPD*, New York: Bantam, 1992, 72, 110, 114, 115, 120, 121.

¹⁶⁹. Churchill and VanderWall, *COINTELPRO Papers*, 224, 226.

weight by bringing together BPP leaders alongside Karenga and Carmichael. Per usual, Los Angeles Community College on Vernon Avenue was critical to their fortunes. Among their stalwarts were Ronald Freeman, tall and lanky, and his brother, Roland. Once there were five BPP offices with the smallest in Watts near 103rd Street and Wilmington and the main office on Central Avenue with 2000 square feet downstairs, a general office, a so-called gun room, and a large room with a backdoor. There were rooms for printing and communications too.¹⁶⁹

Other than Pharr and the Freeman brothers, principals included John Huggins, who—according to Deacon Alexander of the Hursel and Franklin Alexander clan—“also came from a Communist Party background.” But the heterogeneity of the forces was embodied in Raymond “Masai” Hewitt, who became part of the national leadership. Said Alexander, “there was no more greater anticommunist on this planet” than this handsome comrade: He “hate[d] the Communist Party,” and like Cleaver and others was a “quintessential Maoist.” Yet when “Bunchy [Carter] was murdered, it was his opportunity to rise and so he got together with Elaine Brown and did exactly that.” But even Alexander was not a member of Carter’s fan club: “I was only a member of the Panthers for between four and six months” and “I stayed out of Bunchy’s way much as I could—as much as humanly possible” since “he had a reputation for resolving contradictions with a gun very quickly.” And then after he was killed, the “L.A. chapter was taken over by Geronimo [Pratt].” Hewitt’s anti-CP ethos was reflected in SNCC when Franklin Alexander was “expelled” for “being a member of the Communist Party.” Irving Davis of SNCC was a “rabid anticommunist,” a trend not mediated by his having, reportedly, “taught...Afeni Shakur” of the New York BPP.¹⁷⁰

Eventually, SNCC took “disciplinary action” against Davis because of various speculations, though he was not dislodged from his crucial post as “head of International Affairs.”¹⁷¹ One militant of that era found Alexander’s expulsion acceptable since the *Los Angeles Times* would have objected to his playing a major role¹⁷²—giving this source of conservatism veto power over staffing of the Black Liberation Movement, exposes why it tended to run aground.

The Black Left in L.A. was eclectic. Huggins, easygoing, charming, and charismatic, was often adorned in “white hippie, thrift store stuff,” i.e., “mismatched clothes.” Roger “Blue” Lewis was a “dark skinned brother” with a

170. Pharr, *Nine Lives*, 70, 83.

171. Deacon Alexander, Oral History, CSU-Northridge, 14 August 2019 (abbrev. Deacon Alexander, Oral History). I can attest to Davis’s ideological persuasions. In the early 1970s he ousted me from the Pan African Skills Project, designed to send African Americans with various abilities to contribute to nation-building in Africa, because he suspected that I was a Communist. See Home, *1972: Supremacy Confronted*, passim. See also *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 27 February 1969: Hewitt, 27, “held in Chicago hijacking” of airplane. Cf. *The Black Panther*, 30 August 1969: “Masai” Hewitt and Shirley Neely wed with wedding rings made from U.S. planes downed over Vietnam.

172. Statement, 1970, Ron Wilkins Papers.

173. Joseph Henry Johnson and Ayuko Babu, Oral History, 18 October 2018, CSU-Northridge.

"disarming smile and a real charismatic personality, real easygoing." ji Jaga was "medium brown, short and bowlegged" with an imposing "air of physicality," whereas Wayne Pharr himself "was serving as the elected president of the BSU [Black Student Union] at Harbor [College]" and worked "heavily" with the umbrella "Black Student Alliance," indicative of the BPP's reach and influence.¹⁷³

By January 1969 there was a BSU national headquarters at 3106 Shattuck in Berkeley, a brief stroll from the ordinarily tempestuous campus.¹⁷⁴

Helpful to national efforts was a 10-point program and platform for "Black Student Unions" highlighted in the BPP journal.¹⁷⁵ Inspecting this multi-faceted activity, the counter-cultural *Los Angeles Free Press* began looking to students as the vanguard of radical transformation—an adjunct of the breakneck building of campuses in the Golden State—and sketched accordingly "the student as [n-word]."¹⁷⁶

This BSU office was conveniently close to the BPP's national headquarters and, expectedly, they greeted this activism with barely concealed glee. There was a "growing student strike" in L.A. led by the "Black Student Alliance," where Pharr played a key role, and it contained "all the city's Black Student Unions." Strategically, the BPP then was "calling for the spread of the strike throughout the city and into white schools," not farfetched since "virtually every school in the Los Angeles area has had some activity." Already there were "strikes at Cal State" campuses including Dominguez Hills and San Fernando Valley State. The activism "grew out of a week old strike at all Black Southwest Junior College," and this was preceded by a "a student police battle at Carver Junior High School, more than 20 [other] junior high schools, high schools and junior colleges"—all of which "exploded." L.A. Panthers were ecstatic asserting that they were the "Black Liberation Army for the people." For in this town "we have Black people who have migrated from all parts of the country" yet "we have all kinds of Toms. Bootlickers, opportunists, Black Capitalists and even the petit bourgeois." The remedy? "Stop sitting on your hands and wrap them around the trigger of a .45, .357 Magnum [or] 12 gauge carbine."¹⁷⁷

Increasingly, the militancy of the BPP was being inspired by youth in the schools. Carver was shut down as the LAPD waded in, batons flying, sending students fleeing to Imperial Highway as the police worked their way north. A brutal beating of a 13-year-old girl by what a reporter referred to as "the fuzz," meaning cops, outraged her comrades. At Berendo Junior High School, along with Taft and L.A. High, fires were set, to accompany similar flames leaping at L.A.

174. Pharr, *Nine Lives*, 84, 86, 87.

175. *The Black Panther*, 25 January 1969.

176. *The Black Panther*, 11 May 1969.

177. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 3 March 1967.

178. *The Black Panther*, 31 March 1969.

Community College, where a janitor was overcome by smoke.¹⁷⁸ Reportedly, arsonists—pyromaniacs had joined the movement en masse—set five fires during the noon hour at LACC.¹⁷⁹

Inspired by the most youthful of them all, students at the university campus at Dominguez Hills shut it down in solidarity with Carver.¹⁸⁰ During the Fall of 1969 students at Loyola Marymount destroyed school computers,¹⁸¹ and it too was disrupted by aggressive cops.¹⁸² Then the sparks traveled down the freeway to San Diego, as Lincoln High School—80% Black, 10% Chicano—launched its own protests. Then 700 rallied at what was dubbed the “Hall of [In]Justice,”¹⁸³ ranging from the NAACP to the Young Lords,” according to Ofari. Hewitt spoke.¹⁸³

In a thick file maintained on “Black Student Extremism,” the White House detailed the events at Lincoln High School and pointed the finger not only at the BPP (said to be active in 25 cities with 1000 members) but also at their frequent objects of surveillance: youthful Black Communists Kendra Alexander, a student at Southwest College and Vice-President of the BSU there and Franklin Alexander, one of 12 arrested in the aftermath of unrest on this campus.¹⁸⁴ Angela Davis recalled a fundraiser for SNCC near this time at the apartment of the Alexanders on Bronson Street—“two of my closest friends,” she confided—when “money and guns were confiscated and everyone there was arrested on charges of armed robbery”; also seized was a “380 automatic...registered in my name,” which her detractors found relevant when she was placed on trial in 1971-1972.¹⁸⁵

Pharr’s party chortled in January 1969 that BSU and “Mexican students revolt in L.A. schools” with Fremont High School in the forefront. “BSU leaders pledged to continue their strike” that “had shut down the school” that led to the resignation of an unyielding Euro-American principal, Robert Malcolm. Teachers there, most of whom were Euro-American, demanded that a Black principal be hired. Then half of the 3300 students trickled into classrooms, but after a BSU rally attendance dropped to less than one-fourth. Simultaneously, two major demonstrations occurred at Hamilton High School, where “one eighth of the student body is Black.” There was a “sit down by 150 students” and “police came on campus for the first time.” Once more, “student demands included a Black Studies program” and, importantly, “joining the BSU in sponsoring the demonstrations was Students for a Democratic Society at Hamilton.” Provocatively, “an American flag was hauled down—and then burned” by “more

179. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 14 March 1969.

180. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 6 June 1969.

181. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 28 March 1969.

182. Harris, *Palo Alto*, 324.

183. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 18 April 1969.

184. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 18 April 1969.

185. Report, ca. 1969, Box 85, White House Special Files, John Dean Papers, RNPL (abbrev. John Dean Papers-RNPL).

186. Angela Davis, *Autobiography*, 5.

than 300 students" at Crenshaw High School. "Mexican American militants at East Los Angeles College replaced the American flag with the banner of the striking AFL-CIO United Farm Workers Organizing Committee." At Los Angeles City College 200 Chicano students were similarly engaged, while at the University of Southern California Chicano and Black students joined hands—but were frustrated by adamant administrators.¹⁸⁶ Not to be undone, by February 1969 students at the University of California-Santa Barbara seized a building in protest, declaring it to be a "liberated zone."¹⁸⁷ Again, the BSU were the perpetrators.¹⁸⁸

By April 1969 the BSU was "proud," said a reporter, "of closing schools" via "walk-outs," including "Carver Junior High School"; demands included "library facilities for Black Studies" and "better food in the cafeteria."¹⁸⁹ Reportedly half of the student body was striking, spurred by a police attack on them.¹⁹⁰ Arson beset the school principal with \$80,000 in damages.¹⁹¹ The bitter tempest at the campus then known as San Fernando Valley State continued. The NAACP hired the competent attorney—and future federal judge—Nathaniel Jones to defend besieged students, though it was unclear if they were tied to the discovery of three rifles in a Black Studies center there.¹⁹² Earlier, the campus exploded as 300 were jailed.¹⁹³ By May 1969, 286 students, faculty and others were on trial, after a January arrest; 71 were acquitted and to that point 27 were found guilty. Ed Cray of the American Civil Liberties Union termed this spectacle the "largest criminal defense in Los Angeles since the Watts Riots." BSU students who occupied the administration building in November now faced 72 felonies each, including burglary, kidnapping, breaking and entering, and conspiracy.¹⁹⁴ Vincent Bugliosi honed his verbal and legal skills as a prosecutor of these defendants, preparing him for a future career as a bestselling author.¹⁹⁵

However, the protests were not for naught. Afterward, the number of Black students doubled to about 300 and eventually the curriculum was transformed to appeal to their tastes.¹⁹⁶

But students were not just clamoring in protest. Students at Cal State-L.A. were teaching pre-school children at the Malcolm X Center at 4311 South Broadway.¹⁹⁷

187. *The Black Panther*, 4 January 1969.

188. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 21-28 February 1969.

189. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 18 April 1969.

190. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 17 April 1969.

191. *People's World*, 15 March 1969.

192. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 25 September 1969.

193. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 20 November 1969.

194. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 17 January 1969.

195. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 2-9 May 1969.

196. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 3-10 October 1969.

197. Anthony, *Time of the Furnaces*, 102.

198. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 13 November 1969.

These militant trends were not greeted with equanimity by all: A cartoonist for a Negro weekly depicted an actual black panther—an animal—bearing a “BSU” tattoo with a dunce cap sitting in the corner with the caption “Back to school.”¹⁹⁸

Southland Panthers had a more complex and confusing political landscape to traverse, given the presence of the erratic *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, a Black organ that rose as the *California Eagle* of the left—Charlotta Bass’s organ that once employed Cyril Briggs of the CP—declined. Other than baiting Jewish-Americans in a manner that drew the inflamed ire of Briggs, this periodical provided a megaphone to the so-called “Marxist-Leninist Communist Party” which threatened to disrupt an important “Black Power” gathering in South L.A. in 1967. “We will not tolerate the pro-imperialist Black Power conference,” said Michael Laski, their chieftain. He then was arrested after a confrontation with Dorothy Healey, described in these pages as the woman “who heads the revisionists or the white Russian Communist Party.”¹⁹⁹ Despite their evident hostility to Euro-Americans, Laski became a regular columnist on their roster.²⁰⁰ It was Laski who argued in the midst of state repression of the BPP that their “failures and mistakes” actually “played into the hands of the racist state at every turn” as they were “manipulated by the white rulers.” They specialized in forming “Armed Suicide Squads ‘capable of defending no one.’” As of August 1968, barely after it attained liftoff in the Southland, Laski was of the view that the BPP “has passed its zenith now” and “will soon pass from the political stage.”²⁰¹ Actually, it seemed that Laski was about pass from the political stage when Ronald Lewis Preston was convicted of conspiring to kill him.²⁰² Nevertheless, a grim headline resonated: “Want to commit suicide? Join the Panthers.”²⁰³

Their editor, Pat Alexander, was scornful in assessing the May 1967 manifestation in Sacramento that thrust the BPP into the national spotlight. This “Black Panther drama” should win an “Oscar” was the verdict; she “suspect[ed]” that the comrades were “paid by the CIA,” and “our responsibility as the only Black-owned and operated press in Southern California” (not accurate) was to expose this purported fraud when “twenty six young Black men ranging from the ages 17 to 25” (also not accurate: there were women present) executed “one of the most amazing incidents in legislative history” (accurate). This was “designed to create [an] anti-Negro climate, to set the stage to place [African-Americans]

199. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 9 January 1969.

200. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 15 April 1967.

201. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 18 July 1968.

202. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 3 August 1968.

203. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 8 October 1970.

204. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 12-19 December 1969.

into concentration camps." They were "like [Karenga]" in that they were "well financed" and were "paid agents."²⁰⁴

Despite their Black Nationalist pretensions, this newspaper was no fan of Karenga: "Karenga's goons attack Black men" was a typical headline. At the Black Congress in 1968, speakers were "unceremoniously interrupted by three Black men" by "15" of Karenga's comrades, who "invaded the premises in a hostile fashion and made threats against some women."²⁰⁵ Soon, SNCC announced solemnly that "Forces of counter-revolution are in control of the Black Congress."²⁰⁶

Speaking of "paid agents," this periodical's primary foreign correspondent, Richard Gibson, fit neatly into this questionable category. It was not unusual for him to pen two articles on the front page.²⁰⁷ Repeatedly, he attacked Moscow²⁰⁸ and saluted fringe ultra-leftist grouplets, for example, those that arose in Mozambique. Mervyn Dymally, a premier elected official in Black L.A., did not escape their gaze since he had the gall to hire a "white secretary in his downtown office" and then "organized a campaign against the editor" of the *Herald-Dispatch*. A major object of their fury was "these Negro-Black Nationalists with these white wives," underlining their Black Nationalist bona fides.²⁰⁹ "Black Nationalists-white bedmates harm 'Negroes'" was an emblematic headline. Those in Southern Africa of a similar mindset to theirs received positive publicity.²¹⁰

They were overjoyed when "funds" were "stopped" for the Community Alert Patrol—precursor of the BPP insofar as it monitored the police—"as the result of organized protests... by [the *Herald-Dispatch*]."²¹¹ A writer in their pages accused the competition—the *Sentinel*—of "being owned by white plantation owner[s]"—this was said while they were typically scoring "Black Panther drama."²¹² This journal's job seemed to be sowing confusion: "Communist" and "Capitalists" were "one, same" in their "attack on Negroes."²¹³ Thus, their motto: the "*Herald-Dispatch* is anticommunist. This is a matter of record"—but they opposed the war in Vietnam.²¹⁴ Thus, they billed themselves as "anti-imperialist," stressed global coverage and claimed a circulation of 200,000 (likely inflated).²¹⁵

²⁰⁵. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 13 May 1967.

²⁰⁶. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 20 July 1968.

²⁰⁷. Statement, 22 August 1968, Ron Wilkins Papers.

²⁰⁸. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 20 July 1968.

²⁰⁹. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 1 June 1967.

²¹⁰. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 8 June 1967.

²¹¹. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 2 December 1967.

²¹². *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 17 June 1967. Cf. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 15 September 1972: CCAP "still on the street.... 62,000 residents who hold membership cards and display the...decals in their homes and businesses... [they have] found numerous lost and abandoned children."

²¹³. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 20 July 1967.

²¹⁴. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 22 July 1967.

²¹⁵. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 9 November 1967.

²¹⁶. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 14 March 1968.

They provided curiously favorable coverage to Robert F. Williams, the Black Carolinian who sought exile eventually in China,²¹⁶ especially from Gibson. When he received a new U.S. passport in Tanzania, after denouncing his homeland from Cuba to China, this was treated at length by Gibson in their pages.²¹⁷ "Russians held responsible for attack on Stokely Carmichael" was their questionable conclusion.²¹⁸ Prominent space was given to Carmichael and his "friend Willard Murray of Mayor Samuel Yorty's office." Murray was "intervening on behalf of Mr. Carmichael" to make sure he had a hall in Oakland to address the masses.²¹⁹

After the UCLA shootout, it was the *Herald-Dispatch* that told their readers that "police guard Karenga," who in turn seemed in sync with the paper's line in charging that the BPP "had now become a front for the white leftists. There is validity to this charge"—such was the paper's attempt at sagaciousness.²²⁰ Despite this pat on the back, the paper later countered waspishly: "Karenga's mob in deep trouble" in a courtroom presided over by Judge Malcolm Lucas with attorneys Gerald Lenoir and Frank Evans defending them.²²¹

Prophetically, a few days later the LAPD sought to make Laski's words come true, when he counseled that joining the BPP was like signing a suicide pact. "Panthers lose shootout" in the "fashionable West Adams Heights area" as "three young Black men were killed" including "Steve Bartholomew, 21, an alleged captain," alongside Robert Lawrence, 22, "also an alleged Panther," and Melvin Lewis, 18, who "died a short time later." Overhead, "police helicopters" buzzed as "huge searchlights" illuminated the scene. "For the first time since I've been in Los Angeles," said their reporter, "there were men patrolling West Adams Boulevard on foot."²²² This soon-to-be familiar scene was coupled with another: "three [cop] cars together with shotguns sticking out of windows" were cruising the streets: "the day of reckoning is at hand. Prepare for it."²²³ Panthers concurred in that they saw the flooding of their communities with cops as consisting of the advance guard of gentrification, which was to mushroom in coming decades.²²⁴

A few months later there was "tight security at Panthers 'trial,'" said an observer, combined with various "security restrictions...similar to those set up [at] the Sirhan Sirhan trial," accused assassin of former U.S. Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy. Materializing as the defendants' counsel was none other than

217. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 24 July 1967, 31 July 1967, and 5 October 1967.

218. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 9 January 1969.

219. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 16 December 1967.

220. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 13 January 1968.

221. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 15 January 1969.

222. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 31 July 1969.

223. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 17 August 1968.

224. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 15 August 1968.

225. *The Black Panther*, 6 April 1969.

the son of Loren Miller,²²⁵ who then carried his father's torch into the 21st century. More attorneys were needed when 16 students including the BSU leadership went on trial for various alleged transgressions at Southwest College.²²⁶

The Communist press was enthusiastic about this "unprecedented student strike" that involved "10,000 junior college, high school and junior high students," not to mention post-secondary students. They were supportive of his mayoral campaign because of hostility to Mayor Yorty, yet "ironically, Black City Councilman Thomas Bradley was among" those who "spoke of the necessity of using police on campuses," especially Southwest College, the "key link in the chain reaction of the ghetto schools." They saluted "a three month dispute" there "with an almost all Black student body of 1700."²²⁷

This was burdensome for the BPP and part of the strategy of driving them out of business. "Panthers need money" for bail, lawyers' fees and the like was a cry that was to become consistently urgent.²²⁸

Then the authorities raided the BPP in the prelude to the December 1969 shootout which allegedly yielded a "gun cache" and "explosives," including "short lengths of pipe for making bombs" with "detonating fuses...handguns, a shotgun." Targeted were "Charles E. Yancy" and "Roger Lewis," alongside "Nathaniel Odis Grimes, 21 and Arthur Dewitt League, 20," the latter "picked up in the swank home of movie actor, Donald Sutherland, away in Europe."²²⁹ However, his spouse, Shirley Sutherland, was taken into custody.²³⁰

In the runup to the December 1969 raid the LAPD had tipped their hand, for weeks earlier, "for the first time since our office has been active," said the party, "the F troop fascists made an attempt to vamp on the Southern California's central headquarters." It was 12 November 1969 when these men in blue "forced children from the breakfast at gunpoint" as about "75 pigs...converged on our building," as "50 persons were in our office, including 15 women, 5 children and 2 small babies. Nurses and doctors were present to finalize plans for the soon to be opened Bunchy Carter Free Clinic," accompanied by an attorney.²³¹ Then, as a warning on 6 December in the early evening, cadre George "Duck" Smith was shot by cops at 41st and Central, the precursor to the "calculated genocide."²³²

226. *Los Angeles Herald-Tribune*, 12 July 1969.

227. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 25 June 1969.

228. *People's World*, 15 March 1969. Bradley was defeated in his attempt to unseat Mayor Yorty in 1969, despite a stunning 80% turnout. The incumbent received 53% of the vote. Also, the only Black incumbent on the school board, the Reverend James Jones, was defeated. Bradley's campaign literature pictured him in his cop uniform, while an opposition brochure sought to tie him to the CP: *People's World*, 31 May 1969.

229. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 12-19 December 1969.

230. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 31 July 1969.

231. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 3-10 October 1969.

232. *The Black Panther*, 22 November 1969.

233. *The Black Panther*, 13 December 1969.

The point about the Sutherlands illustrates a comparative advantage enjoyed by the Southland comrades: access to the celebrity—and cash—of Hollywood. Earlier a “Cleaver-Newton Defense Committee” was established with a fundraiser held at Hollywood High School featuring Kathleen Cleaver, James Baldwin, the popular band Country Joe and the Fish, along with the BPP’s own Shermont Banks,²³³ 26, described elsewhere as “tall, well-built, handsome.”²³⁴ Yet, apparently spooked after Carter’s slaying, Banks said Pharr “faded away into oblivion,”²³⁵ as did comrades too numerous to note and, ultimately, the party itself.

234. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 6 February 1969.

235. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 6 March 1969. For more on Banks, see *Los Angeles Free Press*, 3-10 January 1969.

236. Pharr, *Nine Lives*, 118.

Chapter 12

Armed Struggle? 1969-1972

From UCLA in January to the shootout at headquarters in December 1969 proved to be a year of bloody setbacks for the BPP. Nervously, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, which kept a close eye on the party, reported just before the UCLA killings that there were 45 chapters, and only 13 a year ago, but that was before an internal "purge" driven by purported indiscipline of members, likely growing out of the lumpen orientation¹—or overreaction to COINTELPRO. Even by May of this year of bloodiness the party acknowledged that "in less than one month (late April and mid-May) 42 Panthers in L.A. were arrested a total of 56 times" with "over \$100, 000 bail...set for the 42 brothers." Reflexively, "party funds" were "drained and worthwhile programs slowed down"; "brothers['] and sisters['] homes have been raided," while "apartments that Panthers had rented have been burned just prior to occupancy." The Ash Grove, "a forum for radical and revolutionary art...was mysteriously burned 2 days before the beginning of a singing engagement" by Elaine Brown, while "several rooms of the First Unitarian Church [have] been raided twice in the past month and burglarized at night." As for the once vibrant Watts office, it was "no longer necessary to open the door" to enter, "you can climb through the completely broken 2 front windows [and] walk through the former glass door. The westside office also has been raided twice in that period and burglarized." These brutal tactics were extended to their non-Black supporters like Donald Freed and Shirley Sutherland in "Friends of the Panthers": A "female member was mysteriously pushed down a flight of stairs outside her home and one of the men's car [*sic*] was recently burglarized and vandalized."² Inexorably, these hammer blows were impactful: "Because of the severe repression," said the party, "we have had to cut down on the size and

1. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 14 January 1969, Reel 28, Black Panther Documents.

2. *The Black Panther*, 23 May 1969. A monograph on arson as a political tool during this era would be welcomed. See *San Francisco Examiner*, 29 October 1968: Cleaver claims that "white men have been 'offering big money' to young Black people to burn down white owned buildings in the Black community in [San Francisco]" for insurance money. Moreover, Panther Pete O'Neal argues that robbers would pose as Panthers, causing the party to be blamed: See Paul J. Magnarella, *Black Panther in Exile*, 50.

circulation of our paper,"³ a major source of funding. (Kansas City Panthers, for example, would sell 3000 newspapers per month—also a barometer of popular support—and would garner about 13 cents per copy.⁴)

Southland Panthers were being thrown behind bars, including Daniel Michael Lynem, denoted as the "Santa Ana 1," among the various Panthers picked up and harassed by the authorities—and one beaten—"on suspicion of murder," it was said. Then 10 sheriff's deputies and FBI agents, armed with rifles and shotguns, forcibly entered the abode of Joanne Gilbert of "Friends of the Panthers" on questionable grounds; she toiled in the breakfast program and her harassment was based on a tip that there were two Panthers nearby thought to have killed a Santa Ana cop.⁵

Moving steadily southward, the "pigs"—said the BPP—ran "amuck in San Diego." There "brothers and sisters" routinely assembled at Mountain View Park every Sunday. But on 13 July 1969 "four pigs" began "harassing everyone" and "started beating" a "brother." Tear gas grenades were launched. Bruce Lewis, a former BPP cadre, was shot three times, once in his chest, then shoulders. Possibly, this typical attack was a reaction to the growth of Panthers along the border. By then their breakfast program was feeding 100 kids daily and was named in honor of John Savage, a recently slain cadre. Christ the King Church at 32nd and Imperial was the site. Though Bethel A.M.E. was slated to be the venue, "some 'unidentified 'vandals' broke into the church and destroyed the files and equipment."⁶ The Mountain View fracas was hardly minor, however, continuing for hours and involving shooting, burning and roadblocks. At one point someone fired on a "line of police with a Thompson machine gun," said an authoritative source. As a result, "Tensions were high in the Black community throughout the week."⁷

Then while cruising in San Diego, Jimmy Johnson, Ronald Freeman, Otis Moran and Gloria Shields were harassed, then arrested.⁸ Simultaneously, said an observant Panther, "three car loads of fascist pigs vamped on Panther brother Anthony Dumas" as the "pigs" sought to "intensify their efforts to destroy San Diego Panthers." Possibly this was a response to the supposition that the competent Johnson and Freeman were sent southward to be placed "in charge of the San Diego branch."⁹ Whatever the case, by August 1969 the BPP allegation was that "Le Roi Jones and Ron Karenga murdered Brother Sylvester Bell of the San Diego branch," at least their grouping, US, did. This was the "fourth member

3. *The Black Panther*, 30 August 1969.

4. Magnarella, *Black Panther in Exile*, 77.

5. *The Black Panther*, 5 July 1969.

6. *The Black Panther*, 26 July 1969.

7. *The Black Panther*, 9 August 1969.

8. *The Black Panther*, 2 August 1969.

9. *The Black Panther*, 16 August 1969.

of the [BPP] to be murdered by US" since January 1969, Carter, Huggins, and John Savage included.¹⁰ Still, it was the Bell slaying that was particularly egregious. He "was cowardly murdered by the US organization at Otto Square," said the BPP, in August 1969.¹¹ He was killed in broad daylight in what was described as a "brazen" hit job at a crowded San Diego shopping center. There was a reign of terror on the border: On 14 August 1969 two Panthers were slain—Anthony Dumas and Zeke Tate—both "shot by the US organization," it was said, as they were "approaching the intersection at 32nd and Market Street."¹² In that context, the US cadre known as Tayari endured an assault at his home, hit—said Wayne Pharr—by "at least thirty-five to forty rounds" in apparent retaliation as Bell became, he said, the "fourth" Panther "to be murdered by US."¹³

Possibly because it sat in the imposing shadow of a larger L.A., the authorities, and their allies, may have thought they could get away with more in San Diego. By September 1969 there were said to be "victims of attack by fascist vigilantes representing themselves" as cops "under the usual pretense of looking for a fugitive from justice."¹⁴

The BPP objected strongly to the "bringing [of] Constitutional Fascism down hard on the Southern California chapter...one of the strongest chapters in the country." By the autumn of 1969 there were "six brothers in California...currently facing death in the electric chair or life imprisonment...all are charged with murder [or] attempted murder." In Santa Ana, a comrade was "charged with the murder of...[a] rookie 'Pig of the Year.' The sole evidence against him is of the demographic...variety." Paul Cross and Roger "Blue" Lewis were facing murder charges. Robert Williams and Luxey Irwin "here in Dodge City [L.A.]" were "charged with the kidnapping of two white women and one little white girl." The authorities were trying to "link" Romaine "Chip" Fitzgerald with "Robert and Luxey's case." The same night that "Brother Touré (Walter Pope) was brutally murdered" by the LAPD, Bruce Richard, 18, was "critically wounded"—like Pope, he was a "hard working and dedicated Panther"—though he "survived the pigs' .357 bullets."¹⁵ "Supposedly," said the party, "he and brother Walter Touré Pope...sneaked up behind a parked unmarked car at Manchester and Standard [sic] in an attempt to ambush the pigs...with a shotgun and a carbine" but he was now a "political prisoner" while Pope perished.¹⁶ Yet his death motivated many to emulate his practice. A former inmate, while behind bars he read Mao, Nkrumah,

110. *The Black Panther*, 23 August 1969.

111. *The Black Panther*, 11 July 1970.

112. *The Black Panther*, 30 August 1969.

113. Pharr, *Nine Lives*, 133.

114. *The Black Panther*, 20 September 1969.

115. *The Black Panther*, 25 October 1969. His surname was also rendered as Erwin not Irwin: *The Black Panther*, 15 March 1970. For more on Richard, see *The Black Panther*, 8 August 1970, and 14 November 1970: Richard convicted.

116. *The Black Panther*, 25 April 1970.

Fanon, and once he left prison, in a Stakhanovite fashion, he single-handedly increased sales in a certain jurisdiction from 7000 to 10,000 within weeks while he served as Distribution Officer.¹⁷

By July 1968 the L.A. chapter was said to have 400 members, and the plan of the authorities appeared to reduce their numbers by any means necessary.¹⁸ (By way of comparison, appearing on the TV show of Les Crane in April 1968, a CP leader said that there were 1000 Reds in the Southland and 11,000 in the U.S., and of those 1000 a sizable percentage were Black and a much higher percentage were Jewish-Americans; Dorothy Healey mentioned in passing her staunch opposition to Israeli aggression.¹⁹)

Still, despite these multiple crises at the same time the BPP maintained at least three offices in the Southland, including 4115 South Central Avenue, a Watts office, and 2952½ Imperial in San Diego.²⁰ In 1969 a community center named for the slain Walter Pope debuted and became a site for the free breakfast program.²¹

The Panthers did not accept these macro-aggressions lethargically. Cleaver's words from the counter-cultural *Berkeley Tribe* were reprinted, wherein he challenged his comrades, asserting "we are either pig killers or pig feeders" since a "determined revolutionary doesn't require authorization from a Central Committee before offing a pig" since "when the need arises, a true revolutionary will off the Central Committee itself," a bold, even ultra-leftist *cum* anarchistic proposal, the likes of which contributed to debacles in Grenada in 1983 when Prime Minister Maurice Bishop was assassinated with the complicity of his Central Committee. Undeterred, Cleaver went on to advance the notion that "we must accelerate the slaughter of the pigs."²²

Ultra-leftism, posing as more radical than thou, was Cleaver's trademark. When Harlem's liberal Congressman Adam Clayton Powell was besieged, it was Cleaver who piled on accordingly.²³ As for Stokely Carmichael, he was "very disappointed" with this "lone wolf...I spent much time with Brother Stokely. I traveled with him...I'm pissed off at him." Harold Cruse, a Black intellectual with anti-CP traits, should have been embraced by Cleaver; instead, he was depicted as "ideologist for the Black Bourgeoisie," finding it "very significant that the Blacks who are most into Cultural Nationalism are the children of the middle

17. *The Black Panther*, 24 October 1970. See *The Black Panther*, 29 August 1970: Saidji Jaga: Pope "took the distribution of our national papers from 3000 to 8500 before he was murdered."

18. Jeffries and Foley, "To Live and Die in L.A.," 266.

19. Transcript, 5 December 1968, Box 3, Dorothy Healey Papers-UCLA.

20. *The Black Panther*, 1 November 1969.

21. *The Black Panther*, 13 December 1969.

22. *The Black Panther*, 22 November 1969. See also Tony Martin, ed., *In Nobody's Backyard: The Grenada Revolution in its Own Words*, Dover, Mass.: Majority, 1985.

23. *Michigan Chronicle*, 24 September 1968, in Reel 9, Papers of the Revolutionary Action Movement, Columbia University, New York.

class. For instance...Jimmy [Garrett]...Ron Karenga and Le Roi Jones," for whom he once expressed admiration.²⁴

Cleaver was a harsh critic of both Carmichael and the Black Power ideology that he symbolized, the likes of which were often featured in the party periodical.²⁵ Yet Cleaver's critique was enmeshed in contradiction in that he was bewildered by the Howard alumnus's coolness toward deifying Malcolm: "We can't follow a dead man. That's worse than following a blind man" were words attributed to the former SNCC leader—though Cleaver could be accused of following other "dead men," Fanon, for instance. Of course, when Cleaver joined the party in February 1967, a triggering factor was his being impressed with their performance providing security for Malcolm's widow in a Bay Area visit.²⁶

Indeed, a BPP editorial denounced "Stokely's jive," blaming him for the New Haven trial of Chairman Seale since he had vouched for a man who proved to be less than reliable. He "personally sponsored him into the Black Panther Party," speaking of George Sams. Ignoring the roots of some of their comrades, they tended to blame "freaks with their college educations from Jimmy Garrett, Ron Karenga, Le Roi Jones to Sir Stokely."²⁷ Newton himself was similarly vitriolic: "We further charge," he said in September 1970, "that Stokely Carmichael is operating as an agent of the CIA"; he pointed to his journey to Jordan with "18 party members" supposedly representing the BPP. "We have no proof of this," said the juridically minded Newton, "but we have some evidence" in that he was "in cahoots with his wife Miriam Makeba who is also an agent." Making it plain in contradicting subsequent historians, he averred, "As you very well know, [the party] does not subscribe to 'Black Power' as such. Not the 'Black Power' that has been defined by Stokely Carmichael." Despite his paper's coverage of African liberation movements and communing with them in Algiers, Newton—perhaps influenced by Carmichael adopting this mantle—asserted that "Pan Africanism is the highest form of Cultural Nationalism," while by way of contrast, "the [BPP] is internationalist."²⁸

With their articulation of "fascism," one might think that the BPP might seek—as in the 1930s—to forge a broad front against this pestilence. Instead, a frothing Cleaver in August 1969 penned an open letter to Stokely Carmichael, terming him derisively—"with the exception of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad"—"the most dogmatic" force "on the scene today" given his "nebulous enunciation of Black Power." He looked back in anger at the Howard

24. Lockwood, *Conversation with Eldridge Cleaver*, 102, 103, 110-111.

25. Cleaver on Carmichael, 16 August 1969, in Heath, *Black Panther Leaders*, 88.

26. Gifford, *Revolution or Death*, 133.

27. *The Black Panther*, 31 May 1970.

28. *The Black Panther*, 5 September 1970. This was echoed by David Hilliard, who added that his party "does not subscribe to 'Black Power' as such." Hilliard statement, 5 September 1970, Reel 2, Black Panther Documents.

alumnus's castigation of the BPP hookup with the Peace & Freedom Party in February 1968.²⁹ Doubling down in his assault on Carmichael, Cleaver insisted that "We are a Marxist-Leninist Party" unlike other formations with which the former SNCC leader was associated.³⁰

Such statements may have led the individual known as "Gay Guevara" to reprimand Cleaver and the party since they "have condemned Black Nationalism."³¹

Rhetorical broadsides against Karenga were launched further: The Panther paper accused him of "maintain[ing] a total number of five apartments and two offices which comes to an expense of approximately eight thousand four hundred dollars per year,"³² leaving the reader to speculate from whence these funds came. He was an "aspiring Moise Tshombe or Papa Doc [Duvalier]," speaking of discredited Congolese and Haitian tyrants. He was "high voiced, short statured," the "eunuch type" in short. He "has received funds from Bell Telephone Company (the car used to get the assassins of John Huggins and Bunchy Carter away from UCLA...was owned by Pacific Telephone)" and "has received funds from Standard Oil (the US organization operates about five...gas stations in the South Central Los Angeles area)." This alleged cultist "demands his followers preface and end everything they say or do with 'All praises due to Maulana,'" the name he adopted for himself.³³

Newton, in a handwritten missive to his attorney, Fay Stender, opened up on Karenga with both barrels, referring to the UCLA tragedy: "It will be hard to close our ranks," as this was a "tremendous breach," this liquidation of "irreplaceable comrades"; equally horrible was that "the assassin and the police are members of the same gang of criminals." Thus, he concluded ominously, "we are prepared to spill whatever amount of blood that is required."³⁴

Writing from Chapel Hill to Kathleen Cleaver in 1969, Professor Ann Dunbar recalled "having known Ron Karenga as a graduate student." Chillingly, she "had always felt he had the capacity for assassination—but I never thought—frankly—it would be Blacks,"³⁵ speaking of the UCLA tragedy.

When an ample meeting of 450 was held in the Southland designed to castigate Karenga, for whatever reason two undercover cops appeared.³⁶

There was something afoot in Black Nationalist circles, including heavy-handed tactics from Washington that were highly disruptive. The White House thought they knew of an eminently manipulable "Power Struggle" in the militant

29. *The Black Panther*, 16 August 1969.

30. *The Black Panther*, 11 October 1969.

31. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 27 November 1970.

32. *The Black Panther*, 6 September 1969.

33. *The Black Panther*, 25 October 1969.

34. Huey P. Newton to Fay Stender, 27 January 1969, Reel 41, Black Panther Documents.

35. Ann Dunbar to Kathleen Cleaver, 8 August 1969, Carton 5, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

36. *People's World*, 29 March 1969.

Republic of New Afrika involving the "Black Legion, a group within the RNA committed to...armed revolution" who "were involved in a shootout with Detroit police" and others. Intriguingly, the "leadership crisis began" upon the return from exile of Robert F. Williams, formerly of China. As his eight-year exile was ending, his comrade Milton Henry had flown to London, and both returned on a chartered plane to the Motor City on 12 September 1969. But by November Henry had suspended his own brother as Minister of the Interior for "proposing dangerous acts, such as placing bombs on property of [Trans World Airlines], destroying British property and using the Black Legion to invade a small British protectorate," all central to this rift. Huge telephone bills and missing funds were also at issue. Then Williams resigned and told one and all that he was "disenchanted with Cuba, China and the Soviet Union because they are prejudiced toward Blacks." Then he agreed to serve as a witness in a trial in Washington, and Lansing then forbade his extradition to Raleigh. The FBI gleefully announced that the "consensus" was that "Williams is interested in his own welfare" and, troubling for a Black Nationalist, "was discharging his two Black attorneys and replacing them with white attorneys." Herman Ferguson, an icon of Black liberation, soon to find exile in Guyana, resigned; "emotions ran high at this meeting" of "150 to 200 members,"³⁷ said to have enmeshed the RNA.

The L.A. scribe Earl Ofari assailed the now celebrated Williams since he "dropped out of the [RNA]" and "now works in the Asian Institute at the University of Michigan, which is nothing but a CIA funded operation."³⁸ His comrade, the CIA asset Richard Gibson, continued to pollute the *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, singing the praises of the apartheid-backed UNITA in Angola.³⁹

Meanwhile, by November 1969 ji Jaga was recorded desperately seeking to reach Hilliard or Hewitt. The "Community Center on Exposition has been taken over by the pigs," he advised, and "4 brothers have been busted...pigs are occupying the Community Center and anybody's going over there will be kidnapped and beaten up.... this is the 1st Community Center we opened" and

³⁷ FBI Report, 23 December 1969, Box 19, White House Special Files, SMOF, John Ehrlichman Papers-RNPL.

³⁸ *Los Angeles Free Press*, 31 October 1971.

³⁹ *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 14 February 1970. Readers should be aware that more research needs to be done in how the authorities also infiltrated the news columns of so-called alternative media. For example, see the controversial interview with Black militant H. Rap Brown wherein he was cited as stating: "I and a lot of my friends prefer to deal with the Chinese...Russians can't be trusted.... Quebec can provide a focal point for revolution in North America.... I have a lot of respect for...Cleaver.... and for Bobby Seale.... West Coast Panthers [are] too damn elitist.... eventually I plan to head for Rhodesia and South Africa to help to destroy these racist inventions... Stokely was a great speaker but he was elitist. He read too much and thought too much without the benefit of experience." He sympathized with the "Progressive Labor Party," while maintaining "Trots [Trotskyites] are awful.... Communist Party of Canada is not worth considering... Weatherman nonsense... symbolic bombing is crazy." *Los Angeles Free Press*, 12 November 1971. Cf. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 19 November 1971: Authenticity of foregoing interview questioned by Liberation News Service.

now “pigs...have riot guns and machine guns” trained on comrades.⁴⁰ Then a few days later another BPP venue in L.A. was said to be “surrounded by 50 to 75 uniformed pigs” seeking to intimidate “50 people inside the office” including “babies.” Hilliard said, “call the news media at once” and the comrade said “she called KPFK [Pacifica Radio] and they will send a reporter.”⁴¹

Interrupting the selling of party newspapers—a primary source of funds—was a goal—and alleged “traffic warrants” were the ostensible excuse for the harassment.⁴² This was mission critical for the authorities since by December 1969 Charles Garry, BPP counsel, already was complaining about the hundreds of thousands of dollars spent on “bail bond premiums alone, cash money that will never be returned to anybody.”⁴³

The BPP thought that a co-factor in explicating the murderous attacks upon them was their being riddled by informants of various types. There was “Earl ‘the Squirrel’ Anthony,” an early chronicler of the organization, and one-time Deputy Minister of Information in the Southland branch. Suspiciously, it was Cleaver who made the unilateral decision to appoint him to this high-level post.⁴⁴ But by June 1969 he was denounced as a “nutless [*sic*] wonder, devoid of either brain or brawn.” Now he was “running around Europe” spreading disinformation like fertilizer as he pursued a “selfish, one-sided, superficial, trifling and petty” course. He “could not be trusted” for he was a “punk, a sissy and a coward” and was “especially eager to divulge privileged information to anything in a skirt.” His “expulsion” from their ranks—belatedly in September 1968—led to his being “under arrest by the party,” but it was too late to derail this “classic careerist, opportunist” who amounted to a “mental fle[a].”⁴⁵ According to “Masai” Hewitt, he was a “toy paper Panther,” a “Black yahoo renegade...this fool demanded \$300 for an interview, of which he received \$150 from [a] Swedish magazine.”⁴⁶ Hewitt, who helped to found several BPP chapters and was literate and forceful, was also an old friend of fellow Angeleno Cleaver, and mimicked his colorful rhetoric.⁴⁷

There were also Larry and Jean Powell, who testified before Congress damagingly against the BPP: just before this episode they were tried and convicted of five counts of armed robbery—yet escaped imprisonment.⁴⁸

Anthony was not noted when a blockbuster story about a “Los Angeles agent” was “exposed,” but the details about the persecution of “Friends of the Black

40. FBI Report, 6 November 1969, Reel 17, Black Panther Documents.

41. FBI Report, 12 November 1969, Reel 17, Black Panther Documents.

42. FBI Report, 12 November 1969, Reel 17, Black Panther Documents.

43. *People's World*, 27 December 1969.

44. Jeffries and Foley, “To Live and Die in L.A.,” 262.

45. *The Black Panther*, 28 June 1969.

46. *The Black Panther*, 2 August 1969.

47. Major, *A Panther*, 130.

48. *People's World*, 30 August 1969.

Panther" rang no less true. Involved, said the BPP, were "frameups, armed robberies, rape," all implicating a "paid LAPD informer" who went after Donald Freed and Shirley Sutherland and the allegation that he was supplying hand grenades to the BPP, and she was donating funds for weapons. This informer, James Jarrett, had infiltrated their circle and taught a class in first aid and self-defense in earnest of his credentials. His credibility was enhanced since he "carried a blackjack" and rode a motorcycle, but by October 1969 a young woman comrade with the "Friends" was "robbed and assaulted at gunpoint in her own home. Two men, possibly Cuban refugees, force[d] their way into her apartment...called her 'traitor, 'a 'Communist,'" then "decided to rape her."⁴⁹ This kerfuffle backfired multiply, for Canadian Broadcasting took an interest given the roots of Shirley and Donald Sutherland north of the border and they sought to do a story inferentially transmitting outside of the U.S. news about the BPP.⁵⁰

Jarrett, apparently with CIA ties—by July 1970 he was stationed in Israel—agreed to provide mace to a woman allied with Friends of the Panthers (then known as the Liberation Union) but handed over grenades stolen from an armory in San Diego instead, leading to an arrest of the unwitting.⁵¹ Jarrett, said the journalist Earl Ofari, was a "leader of political assassination teams in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos" and "worked for the CIA in Latin America," making his targeting of Donald Freed and Shirley Sutherland even more ominous. Sutherland was no tyro: Her father was a major political figure in Canada, a founder of the precursor of the still powerful socialist-oriented New Democratic Party which delivered single payer health care. Their program, she boasted, was "much more sweeping than the 10 point program of the Panthers," as it was "a very serious Socialist Party." The famed movie director Robert Aldrich, among others, backed her.⁵²

On the one hand, the White House was prosecuting a relentless campaign against the Panthers but, contrary to certain BPP analysts, the nation had yet to reach fascism and thus had to tread carefully. What had befuddled many was that, as ever, the ruling class was deploying fascist tactics against Black folk and bourgeois democracy for the bulk of the settler population. Tom Huston, seen popularly as the architect of an emerging fascism, instead was wringing his hands about the "serious problem" unleashed by these "police encounters" with the comrades in Los Angeles and Chicago (where comrades Fred Hampton and Mark Clark were slain days before the L.A. siege). "Unexpectedly [*sic*] alarming," he said inarticulately, perhaps frazzled by what was transpiring, "is the increasing number of responsible Black spokesman who have come to the defense of the

49. *The Black Panther*, 1 November 1969.

50. FBI Report, 7 October 1969, Reel 17, Black Panther Documents.

51. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 10-16 July 1970.

52. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 7 January 1972.

[BPP] and lent their prestige to the charge that there is a nation-wide effort being made to 'exterminate' the party. Dr. King's anointed successor, Ralph David Abernathy, announced on national television if the BPP were to be crushed, SCLC would be next. The otherwise moderate Whitney Young of the Urban League "surprisingly jumped into the act by calling for a nation-wide probe of public policy," and even Roy Innis of CORE, soon to be exposed as a collaborator with the authorities, "also called for a probe."

An unnerved Huston lamented that "if the leaders of the responsible Black civil rights movement lend their respectability to the BPP, we could have a very serious problem on our hands." Yes, the "FBI correctly views the BPP as the most serious internal threat in the country today." This was within 48 hours of the L.A. besiegement and, he observed, "in the past month we have had at least four reports of BPP threats on the life of the president," accompanied by "stockpiling arms." Yet the Nixon administration had a credibility problem since the Attorney General "is not easily believed by the Black community—moderate as well as extremist." His recommendation: President Nixon should seek to co-opt the Black leadership, inviting them to a "conversation" in order to "halt the drift of support" to the party.⁵³

Earlier, the FBI had anticipated this approach by seeking to co-opt Carl Rowan, a Negro columnist and former U.S. envoy in Scandinavia—described as a "responsible Negro"—by leaking to him material that would "expose the frailties of the extremists," meaning the BPP, and further, stirring up difficulties between the BPP and Carmichael.⁵⁴ This approach may have shaped the CIA's response to Carmichael's journey to the Caribbean, with the "greatest amount" of his time expended in Guyana, a site of tenseness ostensibly between those of African and South Asian descent. Carmichael's stay was a "mixed blessing," it was said, since he spent so much time "stressing...separate development of the races" which "alienated" many. Not only was Cleaver referenced in this "secret" report but also the Cuban presence and Trinidadian intellectual, C.L.R. James.⁵⁵

J. Edgar Hoover had fueled the flames by underlining the "threat against the life" of the president by David Hilliard, "threats" which "echoed in ghetto areas," presenting a "real threat to the safety" of Nixon.⁵⁶ The hysteria emanating from Washington was spreading. When the mass murderer Charles Manson in 1969 executed his dastardly deeds, part of his plan was to incite a race war that would cause the BPP and the Nation of Islam to be liquidated.⁵⁷ According to the

53. Tom Huston to H.R. Haldeman, 11 December 1969, White House Special Files, SMOF, Box 9, John Ehrlichman Papers-RNPL.

54. FBI to J. Edgar Hoover, 7 August 1968, 100-4448006, Ron Wilkins Papers.

55. "Secret" Report, 6 July 1970, Box 85, White House Special Files, John Dean Papers-RNPL.

56. J. Edgar Hoover to John Ehrlichman, 18 December 1969, White House Special Files, SMOF, Box 19, John Ehrlichman Papers-RNPL.

57. Vincent Bugliosi and Curt Gentry, *Helter Skelter: The True Story of the Manson Murders*, New York: Norton, 1974, 246.

Sentinel, the diminutive killer wanted to recruit the "Straight Satans...gang to lead a rebellion against the Negro race"—or said a local gang-banger.⁵⁸

Amidst the ferment, the NAACP—now being courted by the White House to countervail the BPP—continued to flounder, especially in the Southland. Gloster Current was made aware that these various alternatives to the Association had arisen since their group was much too "dedicated to middle class ideas."⁵⁹ When three charters of local branches were revoked, it ratified this ascendant idea.⁶⁰ Even Roy Wilkins—the "No. 1 Uncle Tom," said branch leader Celes King⁶¹—knew that "multiple branches in Los Angeles have not shown the growth and development...expected." In 1965 there was "total membership," he said, of 4679, and by 1968, 2558, "less than 1% of the Negro population" of 883,000 with embezzling and sticky fingers being a continuing problem.⁶²

Does the NAACP "have [the] right to exist," asked writer Louise Meriwether, as she denounced "world wide Uncle Tom, Roy Wilkins,"⁶³ a charge revived again by bail bondsman Celes King in 1969.⁶⁴ Edward Warren of Watts asked similarly, why "must [we] have militants to wake us up. What was done in 1909 will not suffice in 1969."⁶⁵ Finger pointing was so vigorous that joints might have been dislocated: The *Sentinel* grouched that "every local leader" who "exercised any type of independent, imaginative leadership" was "slapped down by the national office," which sought to "reduce the Los Angeles branch to a subservient satellite."⁶⁶ The culmination of this downward spiral arrived when the main branch office in L.A. was burglarized: "offices were ransacked," a typewriter was taken, meaning that staff were now "installing iron bars at the...window,"⁶⁷ a damaging symbol of their cloistered existence.

* * *

Undaunted, the aforesaid Donald Freed was behind a new group, "The Los Angeles Friends of the Black Panthers" which served "hot breakfast for children" at the Unitarian Church at 8th and Vermont. As armed struggle was stymied, this type of initiative became part of the party's "survival pending revolution" project.

58. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 15 October 1970.

59. Althea Simmons to Gloster Current, 3 December 1976, Part VI, Box C76, NAACP Papers-LC.

60. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 27 December 1968.

61. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 14 November 1968.

62. Roy Wilkins to Charles Thomas, 6 November 1968, Carton 8, NAACP Papers-UCB.

63. Undated statement, Part VI, Box C76, NAACP Papers-LC.

64. *Los Angeles Times*, 13 May 1969.

65. Undated statement, Part VI, Box C76, NAACP Papers-LC.

66. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 15 May 1969.

67. Jesse Scott to J.A. Morsel, 11 August 1969, Part VI, Box C76, NAACP Papers-LC.

Nevertheless, it was also in March 1969 that the BPP claimed—perhaps implausibly, possibly influenced by the popularity of this social welfare initiative --to “have more than 80 branches.”⁶⁸ (In January 1969 the report was that there were 45 chapters and 13 a “year ago” with a “purge” because of unstable elements accepted too readily bound to reduce this figure.⁶⁹)

Possibly the arrival at their banner of the influential Freed caused the BPP to feel that their ranks were inflated. Apparently, the “Friends” had their first meeting at the First Unitarian Church in Spring 1969 with 40 enthusiasts present, many of whom backed the Peace & Freedom Party.⁷⁰

Freed had clout in Hollywood, which may explain why Marlon Brando, the celebrated actor, arrived in Oakland in April 1968 to provide a eulogy for the slain Bobby Hutton.⁷¹ Cleaver recalled, shortly after the murder of Dr. King, the thespian “had flown up from Hollywood” to Oakland: “we took him to my pad and talked and argued with him all night long...we had to wade through the history of the world before everything was placed in perspective and Brando could see.” Thus, when he “split back to Hollywood, after accompanying Bobby Seale to court [the] next day, we felt that we had gained a sincere friend and valuable ally.”⁷² The actor lent his luminosity to Seale, with whom he appeared alongside on television.⁷³ Even the celebrated Swiss-French cineaste Jean-Luc Godard was pictured at a “Free Huey” rally in Oakland.⁷⁴

Brando’s fellow politicized actor, Jane Fonda, took the young Panther Jamal Joseph to a film studio in Harlem at 127th Street and Second Avenue. “It was my first time on a film set,” he recalled, it was a “mind blower” contributing to an important archival departure: “no wonder the Panther leadership encouraged young progressive filmmakers to interview and document us.”⁷⁵ Wayne Pharr recalled that actor Jean Seberg was a “well known supporter of and financial contributor to the party.”⁷⁶ (However, by 1970 the FBI, while taking note of this, suggested that she “should be neutralized” since “her current pregnancy...affords an opportunity.”⁷⁷) When the Donald Sutherland movie *Alex in Wonderland* came out, this leftist actor was helpful when a number of Panthers were given bit parts

68. *The Black Panther*, 16 March 1969.

69. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 14 January 1969, Reel 28, Black Panther Documents.

70. *People’s World*, 29 March 1969.

71. Baldwin, *Collected Essays*, 434.

72. *The Black Panther*, 6 April 1969.

73. *San Leandro News*, 5 April 1968, Reel 27, Black Panther Documents.

74. *People’s World*, 27 April 1968, Reel 27, Black Panther Documents.

75. Jamal Joseph, *Panther Baby*, 139.

76. Pharr, *Nine Lives*, 157. Cf. Report, Special Agent of FBI-L.A., 21 October 1969, Reel 17, Black Panther Documents: Hilliard “says he gave Evon some copies of the two checks that bounced from Jean Seberg, one for \$250 and the other for \$350.”

77. Special Agent-FBI/Los Angeles to J. Edgar Hoover, 6 May 1970, Reel 42, Black Panther Documents.

(though the complaint was made that, in the words of the FBI, "the men only received \$20 each and were supposed to receive \$100 each.")⁷⁸

By June 1969 the stirring film *Z* was screened at UCLA in order to raise funds for the BPP's "Breakfast for Children" program and also for their proposed free clinic. The party needed funding since the arrests and attacks had drained their treasury; in less than a month, it was reported, there had been 56 arrests, while "homes and apartments of members have been vandalized." The filmmaker Costa-Gavras allocated sole distribution privileges for *Z* to the party for a week in June. He was also the spouse of Michele Ray, a writer who did a story in *Ramparts*, Cleaver's old haunt, on the death of Che Guevara.⁷⁹ In that vein, politicized folksinger Phil Ochs joined Seale at a Panther fundraiser at 400 West Washington.⁸⁰

Previously, comedian and actor Bill Cosby marched in Compton on behalf of the creation of a "Malcolm X Freedom School."⁸¹

A virtuous circle was created as anti-Jim Crow measures pushed from below led to the ascendancy of a corps of Black entertainers able to accumulate in some cases, fabulous wealth, which in turn led to their aiding those who had propelled them in the first instance. Thus, backing Panther defendants in New York were the engaged movie stars Ossie Davis, Ruby Dee, and Harry Belafonte.⁸² When Elaine Brown in October 1969 was seeking to raise funds, Hilliard's advice was to call Ossie Davis.⁸³ Then he said, contact comedian/actor Richard Pryor and the Smothers Brothers, television stars.⁸⁴

Yet it was Davis who was the bulwark, also being quite close to the CP's William Patterson. They were together at the U.N. in July 1970 with Coretta Scott King, Newton, and comedian Dick Gregory, petitioning about "Genocide," prompted by multiple assaults on the Panthers.⁸⁵

Contextually, they could have mentioned Beverly Hills Donald Freed, screenplay writer and collaborator with the famed Dalton Trumbo, novelist, and non-fiction stylist. In the aftermath of the December 1969 shootout, he was arrested and charged with providing the BPP with hand grenades. Quickly regaining its footing, the *Herald-Dispatch* assailed him, the Communist press and the counter-cultural *L.A. Free Press* for supposed misdeeds in creating this

⁷⁸ FBI Report, 30 June 1970, Reel 18, Black Panther Documents.

⁷⁹ *Los Angeles Free Press*, 9-16 May 1969. See also *The Black Panther*, 7 June 1969: 2-3 full pages on "premiere showings in America" of *Z*.

⁸⁰ *Los Angeles Free Press*, 28 March 1969.

⁸¹ *Los Angeles Free Press*, 6-13 October 1967.

⁸² Jamal Joseph, *Panther Baby*, 140.

⁸³ FBI Report, 5 October 1969, Reel 17, Black Panther Documents.

⁸⁴ FBI Report, 20 September 1969, Reel 17, Black Panther Documents.

⁸⁵ *People's World*, 11 July 1970.

crisis.⁸⁶ After all, the latter journal gave ample attention to his race for a slot on the Board of Education of L.A., as he deemed the war in Vietnam "immoral."⁸⁷ This militancy made it natural for Freed to announce that the BPP planned to change their name to the "American Liberation Front,"⁸⁸ homage to their Southeast Asian comrades (a story promptly denied by Seale and Hilliard).⁸⁹ But since Freed was judged to be a "strong supporter" of the party, this faux pas could be downplayed.⁹⁰

Freed may have been driven to this premature conclusion by the energy of his activism. Donald and Barbara Freed of Beverly Hills, along with Jay Friedman and UCLA's Donald Kalish (who engineered the hiring of Angela Davis there) were all prominent in the "Committee for Draft Resistance" and their noteworthy "Call to Resist" the war machine.⁹¹

Freed's prominence within the BPP circle was signaled when he appeared among hundreds at a "May Day in L.A." fete in 1969 at the federal building at 300 North Los Angeles St., alongside the Community Alert Patrol, the SDS, "Masai" Hewitt, Donald Cox of the "Free Huey" campaign, with Elaine Brown crooning the Panther anthem.⁹² Reportedly, 600 assembled, deemed by a journalist to be an "extraordinary turnout for 10 A.M. on a workday morning. Quite a few Carver Junior High School students took the morning off to come help Free Huey." The dazed onlooker recalled that less than a year ago, the party had 125 members in Oakland but now it was "operating in some 24 cities with over 60,000 sympathizers," according to the FBI's William Sullivan.⁹³ Yet the negative attention the party attracted in the East Bay caused serious consideration of moving headquarters to Atlanta: "We will have two centers," said Newton.⁹⁴

This attention to May Day was a turnabout of sorts, suggestive of the continuing working-class orientation of the BPP—rhetoric about the lumpen notwithstanding—as they capitalized on this global holiday of labor. Previously, it was Black Communist Claude Lightfoot who spoke on this hallowed date—

86. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 20 December 1969. Cf. Donald Freed, "Oakland and the World: The Rise and Fall of the Black Panther Party," Beverly Hills, Calif., 1972, Reel 16, Black Panther Documents.

87. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 17 March 1967.

88. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 6 June 1969.

89. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 13 June 1969.

90. *The Black Panther*, 2 August 1969.

91. Signatures, n.d., Box 3, Los Angeles Resistance Collection, LAPL. In the same collection, see Box 6: Undated leaflet: "Blacks Against the Draft" and a man with a placard reading, "I fought in Korea. I'm not free...why must we go abroad to kill yellow skinned men for white skinned men who force us to live in rat infested slums?" The draft was analogized to slavery, from their office at: 1093 Broxton #238 in L.A.

92. *The Black Panther*, 31 May 1969.

93. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 9-16 May 1969.

94. *The Black Panther*, 16 October 1971.

also, perhaps not accidentally, the date of the BPP's breakthrough in Sacramento—at 135th and Central.⁹⁵

To the extent that one can attribute veracity to this aforementioned analysis, seemingly inflating membership strength, part of the explanation rests, again, with the BPP's ability to attract adherents on the array of campuses erected systematically in previous years, from junior colleges to giants like Berkeley. The latter had on its faculty the sociologist Robert Blauner, who became a qualified expert in Newton's case, filing well-conceived affidavits on the "pervasiveness of racism" in the U.S.⁹⁶

Marking May Day was not the only way in which the BPP echoed the CP. By June 1969 their newspaper carried two full pages on the case of political prisoner, Wesley Robert Wells, a cause once propelled by the Communist-led Civil Rights Congress.⁹⁷ Long and learned quotations from Lenin peppered the pages of the party periodical.⁹⁸ A full page interview with Black Communist leader William Patterson was displayed prominently in the BPP newspaper, accompanied by Charles Garry, receiving kudos for his defense of Huey P. Newton. Their interlocutors were Seale and Hilliard, who lavished praise on Patterson with whom he was "very close," speaking of this "revolutionary brother" who had "been in the struggle for quite a few years."⁹⁹ A few months later there was yet another full-page story on Patterson as he defended a beleaguered Seale with his captioned words: "Judicial terror poses as law and order" as "White America [is] stripped of any trace of humanism."¹⁰⁰

One did not have to be a Communist to fret about the ascendancy of fascism on these shores, but certainly this was a preoccupation of the CP—then mirrored by the BP. This led to a significant July 1969 anti-fascist confab in Oakland—which I attended—a high water mark for CP-BPP cooperation and a great leap forward in terms of the latter's prestige domestically and globally, not coincidentally. The FBI took note of the breadth of the organizing, taking note of the message from Richard Durham in Chicago to Hilliard informing him that Elijah Muhammad of the Nation of Islam was "unable to travel" but was willing to send a solidarity message.¹⁰¹

"Masai" Hewitt was non-sectarian, à la the BPP itself, in his approach: "There are only two requirements," he insisted: "Be against fascism [and] you can't be anticommunist." Pointedly, he implored that fascism had begun not in Italy in

95. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 21 April 1967.

96. Affidavit of Robert Blauner, 24 February 1969, Reel 34, Black Panther Documents.

97. *The Black Panther*, 21 June 1969. For more on Wells, see the edition of 28 June 1969.

98. *The Black Panther*, 28 June 1969.

99. *The Black Panther*, 5 July 1969.

100. *The Black Panther*, 15 November 1969.

101. Report, 1 July 1969, Reel 17, Black Panther Documents.

1922 but with the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan in 1915; the shootouts, the assassinations, the quotidian police terror, all gave sustenance to his conclusion.¹⁰²

A reporter gleaned the essence of the profundity of this moment, as 4000 delegates assembled: It was "the first time that a Black revolutionary group had the confidence and power to bring together and dominate all the major left forces in the United States." It was also accurate to suggest that the BPP also "raised the Communist Party into a position of great prominence in the United Front" (probably because of the important contributions of the CP to the legal defense of arrested Panthers despite their omnipresent Maoist literature.) As matters evolved, the BPP objectively opted to ally with the "Maoists," which did not help their budding relationship with pro-Soviet Havana, probably more essential to their wider ambitions. Besides this literature there were other contrary signals. Booming greeted the arrival at the podium of Herbert Aptheker of the CP; plus, the frisking of thousands of people meant the confab got off to a late start.

Then, it was said, "Women's Liberation took the [BPP] by surprise when they disrupted [Aptheker's] long talk on the history of fascism." Still, the conference was a landmark featuring less controversial remarks by SDS's Jeff Jones, along with Elaine Brown and future Congressman Ronald V. Dellums. Saturday morning's session closed with a message from Japanese Communists who, it was said, "control most [of] the campuses" in their homeland, a shiny emblem of the BPP's adroit outreach.¹⁰³

Unsurprisingly, key organizers for this confab included William Patterson, Carl Bloice, Vivian Hallinan, Roscoe Procter, Ann Fagan Ginger, and others within the orbit of the CP.¹⁰⁴ Nonetheless, the emergence of a "Neo-Fascist revival at UCLA" in the days following this gathering was an indication that the antagonist could not be underestimated.¹⁰⁵

This was not the only distressing signal from the Southland. The Watts Summer Festival, meant to commemorate the pain and celebrate the historic departure of August 1965, was quickly attracting the negative attention of the authorities. By 1968 they followed three Panthers into a filling station with the result of three dead Panthers and two wounded cops.¹⁰⁶ By August 1969 Earl Ofari had arrived at the annual Watts Summer Festival, a legacy of the conflagration of four years earlier. There was a formidable turnout by the LAPD: It "appeared," he said, "there were more police in Will Rogers Park than there were people," as ordinary folk were "indiscriminately arrested and stopped" and others were "beaten by the police." Elaine Brown, rapidly a rising force in the BPP, read a

102. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 4-11 July 1969.

103. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 25 July-1 August 1969.

104. Minutes of "Organizational Committees for the United Front Against Fascism," ca. 1969, Reel 54, Black Panther Documents.

105. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 1-8 August 1969.

106. Felker-Kantor, *Policing Los Angeles*, 74.

statement denouncing both the police and the festival itself, zeroing in on the prime organizer, "bootlickers like Tommy Jacquette."¹⁰⁷

Her comrade, "Masai" Hewitt, was upset with the "bullshit, lunacy and madness" of the Summer Festival, this "festering mental corpse" featuring a "parade of the Zombies in daishikis" and, not accidentally, "more pigs on the scene than people."¹⁰⁸ By 1971 the story was that "Militant Black Youth oppose Watts Festival."¹⁰⁹

It did not stop there. The breakfast program was disrupted by an invasion of plainclothesmen carting shotguns, who reputedly uncovered a sawed-off shotgun. Down the freeway in San Diego, cops appeared ready to rumble similarly with shotguns and other weapons.¹¹⁰ Signifying the gravity of the matter, the White House was alerted about the attack on the breakfast programs in the Southland, with an emphasis on the murder of Sylvester Bell in San Diego. This social welfare measure was feeding "fewer than 500" children and was a kind of "charity through coercion" of uncooperative grocery stores with the threat of being "firebombed" if they did not comply. "Many businessman in San Diego feel it is better for them to donate than to chance trouble." At the Walter Pope Center, there were 15 kids from 6 to 13, "mostly boys" subjected to a constant "antipolice diatribe," along with "readings from Mao and Lenin to relate Dialectical Materialism to the present BPP struggle and to show the need for a united struggle against fascism."¹¹¹ Yet the White House faced a steep uphill climb, as staffer Egil Krogh acknowledged that a "clear majority of Blacks support the goals and methods" of the BPP.¹¹²

Here is where the party's international reach paid dividends for it was then that Connie Matthews, then in Scandinavia, sent out a press release globally complaining that a "Small army of pigs vamped on the Watts breakfast program this morning...five Panthers...arrested." She then gave instructions for comrades to "find out exactly how the Liberation Movements in Africa go about applying for funds from the Swedish government."¹¹³ By 1970 the Panther counsel David

107. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 8-14 August 1969. See *The Black Panther*, 14 April 1973: Brown moved to L.A. in 1965 and by 1967 was volunteering at Jordan Downs teaching piano. She edited the Black Congress journal and started a newsletter for the BSU of UCLA. Also, said this periodical, she "helped form the Black Student Alliance composed of over 20 different Southern California" BSUs. She joined the BPP in April 1968 and by 1973 had visited China twice. See *The Black Panther*, 7 December 1974: Black Student Alliance: "Progressive organization made up of high school, college and university" students.

108. *The Black Panther*, 16 August 1969.

109. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 12 August 1971.

110. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 12-18 September 1969.

111. FBI Memorandum, April 1970, Box 19, SMOF, White House Special Files, John Ehrlichman Papers, RNPL.

112. Memorandum from Egil Krogh, 28 January 1970, Box 19, John Ehrlichman Papers, RNPL.

113. Skip Malone in Copenhagen to Connie Matthews, 8 September 1969, Reel 17, Black Panther Documents.

Lubell was negotiating a pact with Swedish Broadcasting in Stockholm.¹¹⁴ (Ghana, which had Panther sympathies, could have been helpful here.)¹¹⁵

Funds were a perpetual need, especially since part of the strategy of the opposition was to imprison so many comrades that—like a firefighter compelled to put out flames at the firehouse—the BPP would not be able to organize beyond rounding up attorneys. In this regard the party was advantaged to a degree since they could draw upon the expertise of those who had gained enormous experience in defending the CP. Preeminent in this regard was Charles Garry of San Francisco, described as a “1930s style radical” ensconced in a “modern well-lighted office on lower Market Street...not far from the scene of the 1916 Preparedness Day bombing for which Tom Mooney was sentenced to death and Warren Billings to life imprisonment”—the precursor to the Angela Davis imbroglio in fomenting organized radicalism. Garry conceded that he “went all out” for Upton Sinclair in 1934 and confessed openly, “I am a radical...more than a liberal.” He refused to say before the House Un-American Activities Committee if he were a card-carrying Communist—though he was suspected of it.¹¹⁶ Definitely, that was the considered opinion of the FBI, which spent a good deal of taxpayers’ money on weaving purported ties between Garry, William Patterson, the CP and the BPP.¹¹⁷ The FBI also claimed to have an “informant”—Washington Garner, a “close associate of Garry for years”—present at Garry’s home in Daly City, just outside of San Francisco. Supposedly, the latter city’s “Police Commissioner” was present who wanted to “assist” the BPP.¹¹⁸

Gentrification or ouster of Blacks from neighborhoods proceeded by various means. In Venice, soon-to-be a yuppie citadel, fire alarm boxes were being removed¹¹⁹—the unanswered query was, to reduce false alarms or facilitate arson to drive out Blacks? By March 1971 there were disturbing reports of a spate of fires at Black schools, the latest in Baldwin Hills.¹²⁰

* * *

By then there were free breakfasts for children in two Oakland sites, three in San Francisco, one in Vallejo and one in Richmond, all apparently preceding L.A. In Des Moines they were said to be serving almost 100 kids daily, while in

114. David Lubell to Mr. Olberg, SBC, 27 October 1970, Reel 30, Black Panther Documents.

115. See material on Panthers in Ghana, ca. 1970, Carton 5, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

116. *Sacramento Bee*, 9 March 1969, Reel 28, Black Panther Documents.

117. Special Agent-Chicago to J. Edgar Hoover, 23 October 1969, Reel 31, Black Panther Documents.

118. J. Edgar Hoover to John Ehrlichman, 14 April 1970, Box 19, White House Special Files, SMOF, John Ehrlichman Papers-RNPL.

119. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 5-11 September 1969.

120. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 4 March 1971.

Chicago there were two sites serving 500 daily with more centers to be established.¹²¹ According to party leader Pete O'Neal in Kansas City, "we fed up to seven hundred children a day...we were the only chapter in America that had sirloin steaks," as a result of a compact with "Mafia families"" and "white farmers."¹²²

The L.A. breakfast program began inauspiciously on 29 April 1969. "No church seemed to want to grant use of its facilities," said the party disconsolately. There was a Seventh Day Adventist Church at Budlong and Santa Barbara with Reverend Lorenzo Payte serving as associate pastor; with seeming astonishment the party noted that he "literally had to fight" to accommodate the BPP and for his troubles was exiled to Glendale.¹²³

Part of the uniqueness of the BPP was its ability to spread its tentacles abroad, capitalizing on the alienation often felt by Black troops dispatched to the outposts of imperialism and propagandized in a manner that was not only unconvincing but often delivered the opposite result. This included Private First Class Reginald "Malik" Edwards of Phoenix, Louisiana, in a vicinity that delivered countless migrants to the Golden State. He wound up in Camp Pendleton. "When I first got there," he recalled, "they was [*sic*] doing Cuban stuff. Cuba was the aggressor...we even had Cuban targets. Targets you shoot at." This was one among many alienating factors compelling him to leave the ranks. "I took to dressin' like the Black Panthers," a sartorial choice that was not his alone. "I went to the Panther office in D.C. and joined. I felt the party was the only organization that was fighting the system. I like their independence...this was the first time Black people had stood up to the state since Nat Turner" in the 1830s. "I mean armed. It was obvious that [they] wasn't [*sic*] going to give us anything unless we stood up and were willing to die." Said Edwards, "for me the thought of being killed in the Black Panther Party by the police and the thought of being killed by the Vietnamese was just a qualitative difference."¹²⁴

It was that attitude that worried William S. Norman, an aide to Admiral Elmo Zumwalt. Among Black forces he "discovered a militancy of a nature that I've never seen before in anyone," a "special brand of bitterness" since "Vietnam left a scar on them that won't go away. The Black soldier paid a special price."¹²⁵

Robert Holcomb noticed the "signs the Communists put up in the Ashau Valley [*sic*] which told the Black soldier this was not his war." Responding, "about 20 Black guys refused to go to the field for a good week. They thought more Blacks were going to the field because Blacks were less likely to get shot at." Thus, "our unit was called the Black Panthers." But like others so designated, he

121. *The Black Panther*, 27 April 1969.

122. Magnarella, *Black Panther in Exile*, 54, 56.

123. *The Black Panther*, 14 June 1969.

124. Remarks of Reginald "Malik" Edwards, in Terry, *Bloods*, 5, 11, 12.

125. Terry, *Bloods*, 199.

was asked ultimately to change his tune and become an informant: "they would provide me with an apartment and a subsistence allowance. For each person that I helped them capture on an outstanding warrant, they would pay me from \$1000 to \$3000."¹²⁶

Arthur "Gene" Woodley eventually "joined the Black Panthers" back home, though he was the kind of cadre that was problematic. He did detect that the "dark skinned brothers got most of the dirty details...while the light-skinned brothers and Europeans got the easy chore." However, like others, he was driven over a figurative cliff in that he "collected about 14 ears and fingers" of Vietnamese that were "strung on a piece of leather around my neck"; his callousness did not end there: "We raped her," he said of a local woman—emulating Cleaver.¹²⁷

Even Black soldiers who did not take the route of Edwards picked up subversive lessons on the battlefield. "Black people seemed to get along with the Vietnamese," said Emmanuel J. Holloman, "even though they fought the Communists harder...they feared the Black soldier more than the white soldier because the Black soldier fought more fiercely with more abandonment." Besides, unlike their Euro-American peers, "you hardly didn't find a Black cursing a Vietnamese. And a Black would try to learn some of the words" of their language and "a few of their customs,"¹²⁸ more endearing to this community. Hence, Don F. Browne found that "more Blacks were dying in combat than whites. Proportionately, mainly because more Blacks were in combat oriented units." This meant to "play on the sympathy of the Black soldier, the Viet Cong would shoot a white guy, then let the Black guy behind him go through, then shoot at the next white guy." The military adapted: The "reaction in some companies was to arrange your personnel where you had an all Black or nearly all Black unit to send out," tending to deepen bonds in a manner conducive to Panther recruiting.¹²⁹

Fred V. Cherry encountered a "very good interrogator" who could have been a Panther recruiter. "Sharper than the average gook," he said contemptuously and insultingly. "He read a lot of novels and he knew Black Literature. He had read 'Raisin in the Sun' and 'Invisible Man,'" signature works of Lorraine Hansberry and Ralph Ellison. "He knew more about Malcolm X than I did. And he was very well versed in Stokely Carmichael's philosophy." Moreover, "absolutely," he concluded with a lingering asperity, "Stokely was helping them with broadcasts from Hanoi."¹³⁰

Haywood "The Kid" Kirkland, also known as Ari Sesu Merretazon, was well aware of the myriad attempts to avoid the war: "One of my brothers put some kind of liquid in his eye and said he had an eye problem at the physical. He never

126. Terry, *Bloods*, 203.

127. Terry, *Bloods*, 238.

128. Terry, *Bloods*, 83.

129. Terry, *Bloods*, 167.

130. Terry, *Bloods*, 282.

went." Like others, he was incensed by the "racialism in the base camp area...rednecks flying rebel flags" of the slaveholders, while commanders "told us not to call them Vietnamese. Call everybody gooks, dinks," i.e., multiply the racism these soldiers had to endure.¹³¹

Similarly, Dwyte A. Brown discovered that the "only serious fighting at market time was between Black guys and white guys," as the latter "wanted to play softball. We wanted to play basketball," though tempers flared when they "burned a cross." Brown was clear on the purpose of his overseas mission: "I was fighting the white man."¹³² Black sailors on the embattled U.S. vessel *Kitty Hawk* which bombarded Vietnam before returning to Subic Bay in the Philippines. found that on arriving in this port, their fellow Euro-Americans were paying Filipinos there to attack their African-American counterparts.¹³³

Other than prisons and colleges, the military was a major recruiting ground for the BPP and those of that ilk. SNCC, for example, highlighted the case of J.J. Johnson, formerly of the dissident Fort Hood 3, who refused to be deployed to fight in Vietnam from their Texas base. He headed the "National Black Anti-war Anti-draft Union," then traveled to Indochina to accept the release of U.S. prisoners-of-war, and eventually became an editor of the main CP organ in Manhattan.¹³⁴ In Oceanside, Lance Corporal Clifford Mansker was court-martialed for wearing a bracelet that carried the words "Black Unity" as he was distributing a GI periodical of the same name. This young Black man was off duty—and defended by the CP.¹³⁵

Typically, Cleaver was in the vanguard of this trend, telling "My Black Brothers in Vietnam" in a widely circulated message as the war was heating up that they should "either quit the army now or start destroying it from the inside...sabotage supplies and equipment or turn them over to the Vietnamese," he insisted. This would be payback, he contended, for the "28 members" of the party that he said had been executed in recent years.¹³⁶

Comrade Elbert "Big Man" Howard was in Copenhagen in November 1969 raising funds and "doing real good" according to FBI surveillance. Hilliard was said to have observed that wives and daughters of American prisoners in Vietnam were being urged to send the names of the prisoners to Cleaver, who will begin negotiations for their release in exchange for Seale and Newton. This was known as "Pilots for Panthers."¹³⁷

131. Terry, *Bloods*, 90.

132. Terry, *Bloods*, 259.

133. Truhe, *Against All Tides*, 25.

134. National SNCC Newsletter, ca. 1969, Ron Wilkins Papers.

135. *People's World*, 26 September 1970.

136. Cleaver to "My Black Brothers in Vietnam," 4 January 1970, Carton 5, Cleaver Papers-UCB. It is also to be found in *The Black Panther*, 21 March 1970.

137. Byan Nissim-Sabat, "Panthers Set Up Shop in Cleveland," in Jeffries, *Comrades*, 89-144, 134.

Ideologically unsound Negro soldiers had special problems. Thus Archie "Joe" Biggers, who was scolding in his depiction of Jane Fonda, soon realized that upon returning home, "Black people considered me as a part of the establishment, because I am an officer": "most of the Blacks wouldn't associate with me...calling me Uncle Sam's flunky."¹³⁸

Stephen A. Howard found that "Vietnam taught you to be a liar. To be a thief. To be dishonest," all because "you were livin' a lie."¹³⁹

This climate was made to order for BPP recruitment. Unsurprisingly, a goodly number of the Panther 21, those on trial in Manhattan, had served in the military, which once more, along with prisons and colleges, were fertile recruiting grounds for the BPP. Kuwasi Balagoon recalled his formative years in the military: "We could kick something off inside a club that would instantly turn into a riotous condition" and like the commanding officers they weren't, "would have critiques, just like in the end of war games; get our alibis together; and keep the whole thing under our hats." Moreover, the "Latins, the Hawaiians, the Indians and the sure-enough outlaw whites fought with us," anticipating the BPP.¹⁴⁰

Kwando Kinshasa served in Guatemala and then returned to Jacksonville. "No simple barroom brawl" was the norm as "the entire base became a battleground" with "chains, rifle stocks, knives." The "authorities were afraid that Jacksonville itself would explode and it almost did." There were "no Blacks on the police forces of either Jacksonville or Tampa; and I know that no one in these towns had ever seen a Black man walking down the street with a gun and a white prisoner." Anticipating the Panthers, he "hoped that the Black men watching understood a little that 'an eye for an eye' is still a valid weapon in the hands of the oppressed."¹⁴¹

Kinshasa also accumulated valuable experience in Guatemala, finding himself in the "middle of a revolutionary war.... Right on to the Guatemalan revolutionaries!" he exhorted. He "entered the country a very apolitical Negro Marine and came out a dedicated Black Revolutionary." That transition led him, beginning in 1962, to "read very different articles by Fidel Castro, Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, Jacob Arbenz."¹⁴²

Co-defendant Ali Bey Hassan recalled "lots of fights aboard ship between Black and white sailors" in route to Guantánamo. While in pre-1959 Cuba he "saw nothing but bars and whorehouses...I was eighteen or nineteen" then, but certainly was later disposed to be favorable to post-1959 Cuba.¹⁴³

138. Terry, *Bloods*, 111.

139. Terry, *Bloods*, 128.

140. Remarks of Kuwasi Balagoon, in *Look for Me in the Whirlwind*, 200-204.

141. Remarks of Kwando Kinshasa, in *Look for Me in the Whirlwind*, 204-206, 205, 206.

142. Remarks of Kwando Kinshasa, in *Look for Me in the Whirlwind*, 216-22, 219, 221.

143. Remarks of Ali Bey Hassan, in *Look for Me in the Whirlwind*, 206-211, 209, 215.

Co-defendant Bob Collier was in Cuba in 1964 and by February 1965 was "charged with conspiracy to blow up the Statue of Liberty, the Washington Monument and the Liberty Bell," a potent precursor to the Panther trial: "When I look back at the trial I remember there was more talk about my trip to Cuba than anything else."¹⁴⁴

Co-defendant Clark Squire mirrored another trend that led to the BPP. "Ever since I was a kid in Texas," he said, "I had always had a gun and always knew how to handle it." Arriving in Mississippi in 1964 an "old sister who put me up...introduced me to a 12 gauge pump shotgun."¹⁴⁵

* * *

After the debacle of his shootout in Oakland, resulting in the slaying of "Little" Bobby Hutton in April 1968, Cleaver faced the prospect of returning to prison. Instead, he fled to Cuba. There his fellow exile William Brent recalled he had "access to the best restaurants, bars and nightclubs...he got away with a lot," he added ruefully. But that was not enough for him. He sought to organize a BPP branch in Havana and given his ongoing critiques of Cuban allies in Moscow, this was viewed skeptically at best.¹⁴⁶

Cleaver could not help himself. While in Pyongyang, also dependent to a degree upon the Soviet Union, he scolded Moscow for, allegedly, not doing enough to aid Asia and Africa.¹⁴⁷ Even Henry Kissinger knew of Cleaver's words in Pyongyang where he praised Kim Il-Sung for vowing that he would be "tearing off limbs of U.S. imperialism." This "commentary [by] Cleaver" would be "useful at some future time,"¹⁴⁸ he said dryly and darkly.

Either not understanding protocol or overestimating his own importance—likely both—he expected to confer with Fidel Castro. Instead, he met with the head of intelligence, with whom he had what was described as a "brief but angry personal encounter," alienating the leadership. Still, he was able to reside in a commodious penthouse apartment. After the news was leaked about his presence on the island, however, he was obligated to flee to Algeria.¹⁴⁹

To his credit, while in Cuba he pored over the historical works on the island by Philip S. Foner, the scholar within the orbit of the CP. "I knew Spanish from

144. Remarks of Bob Collier, in *Look for Me in the Whirlwind*, 228-233, 228.

145. Remarks of Clark Squire, in *Look for Me in the Whirlwind*, 253-254, 253.

146. Brent, *Long Time Gone*, 174.

147. Major, *A Panther*, 145.

148. Henry Kissinger to John Ehrlichman, 14 November 1969, White House Special Files, SMOF, Box 19, John Ehrlichman Papers-RNPL. See also Benjamin R. Young, *Guns, Guerrillas and the Great Leader: North Korea and the Third World*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2021.

149. Lockwood, *Conversation with Eldridge Cleaver*, 18, 20, 21, 23.

Los Angeles," he said, speaking of his adolescence.¹⁵⁰ Yet Cleaver—not unlike many African-Americans who amounted to innocents abroad—did not seem to realize that comments seen as anodyne at home were not necessarily viewed as such in nations like Cuba ruled by Communists. Thus, he said, "I was very much influenced by Richard Wright resigning from the Communist Party,"¹⁵¹ though this departure was not necessarily viewed so benignly in Havana.

Cleaver's residence on the island drew the negative attention of the White House, making his presence even more problematic. The FBI was asked to supply information on "discontent in Cuba" for propagandistic purposes.¹⁵² By mid-July 1969 the Swiss legation in Havana notified the U.S. that Cleaver had departed "two weeks ago,"¹⁵³ as the dragnet focused on him was globalized. In response the FBI decided to "promptly" supply further intelligence on these "American Black Extremists,"¹⁵⁴ especially since this amorphous grouping that included Cleaver was trained in the "use of explosives."¹⁵⁵ The FBI claimed to have "sources" within the BPP about the group's ability in "making silencers for guns" and possessing "hand grenades which had 'Korea' stamped on them."¹⁵⁶

The precipitous decline of Cleaver can be marked by his estrangement from Cuba, a nation highly respected by those from whom he sought respect: African liberation movements, the Vietnamese, North Koreans, and others. From there it was a short escalator ride to conservative Christianity, the abyss into which he was to descend. "All my dreams about Cuba were shattered," he said upon arriving in Algiers, as he renounced these "monumental liars." He had sought to "build an international arm of the Afro-American liberation struggle with a base in Cuba" but now he would have to try to do so thousands of miles distant in Algiers.¹⁵⁷

Though Algiers and Cleaver would be involved in a messy divorce, this North African state may have benefited from his presence. After flash floods wracked the nation, the White House rushed to send tents, blankets, and other forms of relief,¹⁵⁸ as if the U.S. were seeking to woo Algiers from the presumed clutches of Cleaver. The Panther presence, Algeria's storehouse of energy, especially natural gas, its role in a nascent Non-Aligned Movement and its support for Palestinian resistance caused Washington to embark on a complicated courtship.

150. Cleaver, *Target Zero*, 243, 244.

151. Lockwood, *Conversation with Eldridge Cleaver*, 88.

152. Egil Krogh to J. Edgar Hoover, 27 June 1969, Box 19, White House Special Files, SMOF, John Ehrlichman Papers-RNPL.

153. Memo from Swiss legation, 17 July 1969, Box 19, John Ehrlichman Papers-RNPL.

154. J. Edgar Hoover to Egil Krogh, 3 July 1969, Box 19, John Ehrlichman Papers-RNPL.

155. FBI Memorandum, 20 May 1970, Box 19, John Ehrlichman Papers-RNPL.

156. FBI Memorandum, 19 May 1970, Box 19, John Ehrlichman Papers-RNPL.

157. Statement, ca. early 1969, Box 1, Cleaver-TAMU.

158. Harold Saunders to Henry Kissinger, 9 October 1969, WHCF, Subject Files, CO, Box 9. Presidential Materials Project-RNPL.

"Gas for the El Paso-Algerian deal" was in motion as Cleaver and the comrades were just getting comfortable, according to a State Department bureaucrat. This formidable enterprise had been "completely nationalized by the Algerians" but Washington was hopeful about a reversal, and Cleaver's misdeeds provided an excuse for him and the legation to become a disposable bargaining chip. This was the case even though "none of the Hassi R'Mel field was ever owned by Phillips or any other American firm" and even though the "Algerians have already settled all of the claims of the American companies nationalized in 1967."¹⁵⁹ Panther Pete O'Neal knew that Algiers was negotiating a "billion dollar natural gas deal,"¹⁶⁰ which should have obligated Cleaver to display his most diplomatic mien and best manners, but that may have been beyond his capability.

At the same time, the White House knew how to press Black buttons. Henry Kissinger transmitted the message from the U.S. embassy that "Algeria is one of the few states that countenances slavery and tolerates that miserable status for thousands of Blacks [Haratin] in Southern Algeria." The "system also extends to [the] north where there are slaves [Abid] in houses as prominent as that of Cherif Guellal in Constantine. Guellal was formerly Algerian Ambassador to [the] U.S."¹⁶¹ This news would somehow be transmitted to the ears and eyes of Black Americans and, as shall be seen, became a talking point for Kathleen Cleaver when she indicted Algiers.

Cleaver happened to be in Havana in January 1969 when he heard of the UCLA slayings, though the conclusions he drew already suggested his losing his grip on realities. On the one hand, he ascertained that the "use and need of Black lackies is at a higher level in the Bay Area" (though no credible evidence was cited), while arguing that "Blacks in the San Francisco Bay Area have more organized machinery than in Southern California."¹⁶² His lack of acuity may have been attributable to the loss of Carter—a "crippling blow to the party in Los Angeles"—whom he saw as "my best friend."¹⁶³ Residing initially in Algiers in a sleazy hotel with his pistol nearby may not have improved his mood either.¹⁶⁴

It did not take long before complaints about him began to rise in Algiers. One interlocutor rebuked him for his "gossiping and use of force" to attain ends: "you must simply change...if you plan to exist in this world," he was told, to little effect.¹⁶⁵ Comrade Byron Booth arrived in Algiers in August 1969 and was disappointed with his reception: "I would have killed Eldridge had he not been a

159. Philip Trezise, Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs to Peter Flanagan, Box 9, WHCF, Subject Files, CO, Presidential Materials Project-RNPL.

160. Magnarella, *Black Panther in Exile*, 116.

161. Henry Kissinger to John Ehrlichman, 14 November 1969, White House Special Files, SMOF, Box 19, John Ehrlichman Papers-RNPL.

162. Statement, 17 January 1969, Box 1, Cleaver-TAMU.

163. Undated statement, Box 1, Cleaver-TAMU.

164. Lockwood, *Conversation with Eldridge Cleaver*, 24.

165. Bunnye Hearne to Eldridge Cleaver, 30 May 1969, Box 1, Cleaver-TAMU.

Minister in the party," he conceded. "I criticized Eldridge for pointing his gun at me."¹⁶⁶

Booth was with Cleaver in Prague, where he addressed 1000 African students, then it was on to Moscow and Pyongyang. En route Cleaver was chattering about how the BPP was headed to "revisionism," by which he seemed to mean their seeking to downplay murderous confrontations with cops, for which he blamed Hewitt and Hilliard. But Booth found Cleaver undisciplined, perpetually intoxicated and "chasing a lot of broads [women]." While in Pyongyang the delegation was given \$1000 apiece, but the error was turning it all over to Cleaver and the currency seemed to stick to his palms. Upon returning to Algiers, Booth described comrades as virtually starving. As to Kathleen Cleaver, Eldridge "related" to her "like she was a slave, working her to death, not feeding her, literally starving her and constantly beating her"—though Booth's credibility was strained since he confessed, "I am also guilty of committing these same crimes against my wife Gwen."¹⁶⁷ His explosive charges were corroborated by Comrade Connie Matthews who, using Cleaver's appropriate nickname, remarked in passing, "The Rage has tripped out."¹⁶⁸

This may have been an oblique reference to one of the more controversial episodes during his stormy tenure in Algiers. He was said to have slain a comrade, Clinton Smith, with an AK-47 weapon gifted from Pyongyang's Kim Il-Sung after Smith was said to have conducted an affair with Kathleen Cleaver.¹⁶⁹

Finally, Ms. Cleaver objected strenuously. By August 1969 she communicated formally with her spouse, outlining the "extreme seriousness of our political/personal status in Algiers today." This was "no time," she insisted "for personal conflicts between two officers" of the party "who happen to be married"; yet "tonight was the fourth time you have physically attacked me in emotional rage" and the "first time you threatened to kill me" and "very vigorously choked me." With a tinge of sarcasm, she related how "sick as you are, tired as you are...all of a sudden you feel so energized that you can leap out of bed, beat me on the head four times, shout at me." She had reached her snapping point: "I refuse to be continually insulted, assaulted."¹⁷⁰

Louise Wibecan chose to complain directly to the Central Committee about her storm-tossed presence in Algiers from October 1969 to February 1970, when Cleaver expelled her. She found that the "fights" of Cleaver and his spouse hindered work, and that Booth and "Eldridge had open conflicts," similarly

166. Statement by Byron Booth, August 1969, Reel 30, Black Panther Documents.

167. Statement, September 1969, Reel 30, Black Panther Documents.

168. Undated statement from Connie Matthews, Reel 30, Black Panther Documents.

169. Gifford, *Revolution or Death*, 198.

170. Kathleen Cleaver to Eldridge Cleaver, 23 August 1969, Carton 5, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

destabilizing.¹⁷¹ Then Seale weighed in, recalling how “Bunchy” Carter, before his slaying, “would come up to [the Bay Area] every other week, sometimes every week” often carping about Cleaver. With a crudity he recalled how Cleaver, a frequent violator of his marital vows, “used to beat her [his spouse] viciously all the time” after she “screwed a couple of people at one point,” leaving her “black, swollen up...she seemed to talk up to him more when other people were around.”¹⁷²

Julia Wright-Hervé, the offspring of the late novelist Richard Wright, also had unkind things to say about Cleaver. She was no fan of Washington since, she said, “My father [was] killed by the CIA,” pointing to a novel by John A. Williams to substantiate her claim. She had worked for SNCC in France, but it was difficult because of her marriage and daughter and ensnaring clashes between James Forman and Carmichael. Still, after conferring with Kathleen Cleaver in Paris in the spring of 1969, she came aboard the Panther train. She worked with Emory Douglas, the party’s premier graphic artist, on an Algiers office, as he had been there “for some time,” but clashes began when Cleaver arrived because of his “authoritarianism and bullying” and his being “caught up in this money publicity straightjacket.” He was taken with “big names and Hollywood style publicity.” This was unfortunate given the “historical importance of Panther presence in Africa.” Wright-Hervé was also skeptical of those surrounding him, like journalist Robert Scheer, his “manager and advisor,” and Elaine Klein, a “rich romantic.” But it all came back to Cleaver, who “acted with so much hostility and wanted to block my passport.” There was the spectacle of her “sister who was working for the party in New York,” then arrived in Algiers and spotted “piles of dollars, thousands of dollars lying around on the bed in [Cleaver’s] hotel room.”¹⁷³ Wright’s other daughter, Ellen, was also well-positioned to the point that when Hilliard sought to reach Cleaver in Algiers, he called her to facilitate it.¹⁷⁴

As for Julia, she too was surveilled in analyzing the “SNCC support organization” in France,¹⁷⁵ as “European Black Power activists” were “planning a visit to the USA.”¹⁷⁶ The latter included John Tillman, “organizer of ‘Black Power’ branches” in Norway.¹⁷⁷ Of course, James Forman was monitored as he arrived in Paris from Stockholm and launched a “violent diatribe” against U.S. imperialism. As ever, the gossippy surveillants discussed in detail his “intimate

171. Affidavit from “I Louise Wibecan” to Central Committee, ca. 1970, Reel 30, Black Panther Documents.

172. Statement of Bobby Seale, 7 May 1972, Reel 30, Black Panther Documents.

173. Statement by Julia Wright-Hervé, 2 April 1970, Reel 30, Black Panther Documents. See also *San Francisco Express Times*, 30 October 1968, Reel 22, Black Panther Documents.

174. FBI Report, 30 November 1969, Reel 17, *Black Panther Documents*.

175. Report, 4 April 1968, Box 85, White House Special Files, John Dean Papers-RNPL.

176. Report, 25 June 1968, Box 85, John Dean Papers-RNPL.

177. Report, 8 September 1967, Box 85, John Dean Papers-RNPL.

relationship while in Paris with a French white woman," a "possible sister of Henri Hervé...current husband of Julia Wright."¹⁷⁸

The surveillants were kept busy keeping track of the Cleavers. "Some Black Panthers in Brooklyn suggested Eldridge...be shot," was the message from the FBI in October 1968. His spouse "appears to have genuine feeling for [him] and if it could be shown he was interested in another female, a split might ensue," especially given the frequent "spats" that bedeviled them.¹⁷⁹ Turbocharging their dispute, they discussed sending inflammatory messages to her: Why does her spouse, it was asked, surround himself with "a group of 13 and 14 year old girls...he even takes some of them on trips...such a bum."¹⁸⁰ Ms. Cleaver passed on to Trisha Baldock "copies of the un-commented original of your love letters" that had been sent to Newton, among others, "as well as...women or wives of Party members."¹⁸¹

This scrutiny began early on with their marriage being recorded on 27 December 1967 in a Baptist church in L.A. at 4630 South Broadway and a detailed profile of her, useful for tracking: "rather light kinky hair, 5'5" tall, weighs about 110 pounds, has a mole on the left side of her forehead just above her left eye."¹⁸²

Nevertheless, Cleaver's years in Algiers were punctuated by bursts of positivity. Kathleen Cleaver was fluent in French, the language of the ousted colonialist, which was helpful to the legation. Pete O'Neal recollected, "We had an ongoing relationship with the North Korean embassy, the Chinese embassy and the North Vietnamese embassy," an investment with potential long-term dividends. The inventive O'Neal "built a soundproof radio room with some really nice equipment contributed by the Red Army people, the Baader-Meinhof gang," as they were termed. "I would interview people" for a "weekly program," then send tapes to the U.S., apprising a wider audience of key trends. O'Neal eventually decamped to Tanzania, but even after Cleaver's apostasy continued to refer to him as "one of the most brilliant minds I've ever encountered," suggestive of the Angeleno's charisma which unfortunately was subject to manipulation. This roseate view may also be a function of the fact that Cleaver was able to position himself, from a safe distance in Algiers, as the epitome of armed struggle in the

178. Report, 21 May 1968, Box 85, John Dean Papers-RNPL. For more on Forman and his subsequent curious political trajectory, see, e.g., Aaron J. Leonard and Conor Gallagher, *A Threat of the First Magnitude: FBI Counterintelligence & Infiltration from the Communist Party to the Revolutionary Union—1962-1974*, London: Repeater, 2017.

179. Special Agent-San Francisco to J. Edgar Hoover, 10 October 1968, 100-448006, Carton 24, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

180. Special Agent-San Francisco to J. Edgar Hoover, 26 November 1968, 157-601, Carton 24, Cleaver Papers-UCB. See also FBI account of conversation between Hewitt and Elaine Brown. He told her that he was en route to L.A. with another comrade. "Elaine jealously asks whether she knows 'her'" and he replies that it was Fred Hampton. Brown replied, "Oh I thought you were bringing 'the woman.'" See Report, 6 November 1969, Reel 17, Black Panther Documents.

181. Kathleen Cleaver to Trisha Baldock, 13 May 1970, Carton 5, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

182. FBI Report, 10 January 1968, Carton 26, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

homeland, while his counterpoint, Huey Newton, headed a “nonstructured gang” with himself as leader (perhaps an apotheosis of lumpen ideology). Cleaver came to be identified with the emergent Black Liberation Army. Said O’Neal, it was a “loosely organized underground movement comprised of [Panthers] and other revolutionaries.”¹⁸³

Thus, somehow Cleaver came to be seen as the “Black Che Guevara,” and relatedly, as one study put it, the “only person to appear simultaneously on America’s bestseller list and the FBI’s Most Wanted List.” His Algiers exile also provided him with a certain aura as he presided over the legation that used to belong to a wealthy French family. There were turquoise painted rooms where he was addressed respectfully and humbly as “Mr. Ambassador.” This provided his claims—an “escalation of violence” was mandated at home with “nothing to reevaluate except the choice of weapons”—with an added gravitas and tapped into discontent with the fruits of non-violence and a concomitant failure to grasp the class collaboration that inhered in settler colonialism. That he was espousing this subversion from Algeria, where settler colonialism had been uprooted, provided him with added credibility.¹⁸⁴ His book *Soul on Ice* continued to sell like ice cream in hell, with Spanish-language¹⁸⁵ and Japanese translations being bruited,¹⁸⁶ as he came to embody worldwide radicalism—and cool.

Cleaver was present at an eminent Pan-African Cultural Festival in Algeria, along with chanteuse Nina Simone, South Africa’s Miriam Makeba and, of course, Carmichael—he had long discussions with him there.¹⁸⁷ Cleaver thought that during Carmichael’s brief dalliance with the BPP, he sought a “coup” against Newton—which would be the accusation subsequently leveled at the Angeleno “He used this thing about white people in a very demagogic way”: “instead of associating with white people openly, he was doing it sneakily,” for example in Algiers. The Howard alumnus and the “nationalist clique were living in the Hotel St. George, the biggest hotel in Algiers,” but confronted by the domineering

183. Magnarella, 107, 108, 109, 111, 112, 115. Cf. “Is Your Town Safe from the Urban Guerrilla,” n.d., BLA Vertical File. In 1971, it was said, the BPP split as Newton began stressing “survival programs”; “all collective decision making was abandoned” and there was an “embrace” of the “Democratic Party.” The “major opposition” to this came from New York and L.A. and Algiers, with the latter opting for “underground armed struggle”—though New York City was the center. See also Paraska Tolan-Szklilnik, *Maghreb Noir: The Militant-Artists of North Africa and the Struggle for a Pan-African, Postcolonial Future*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2023, 105. While in Algiers, according to Ms. Cleaver, “men would congratulate” her spouse for “securing a white woman,” 106. Yet cadre while there were unable for the most part to read newspapers or understand radio and television given the prevalence of the French and Arabic languages.

184. Bill Minutaglio and Steven L. Davis, *The Most Dangerous Man in America: Timothy Leary, Richard Nixon and the Hunt for the Fugitive King of LSD*, New York: Twelve, 2018, 96, 97, 98.

185. Correspondence with McGraw-Hill, 3 February 1969, Carton 3, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

186. Jay Rubin, University of Chicago to McGraw-Hill, 5 February 1969, Carton 3, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

187. Major, *A Panther*, 101.

Cleaver, he was “nervous and intimidated,” an affect unmediated by the presence of the likes of scholar Nathan Hare and the poets Ted Joans and Don L. Lee, also known as Haki Madhubuti.¹⁸⁸

For even as Cleaver nestled into Algiers, perhaps because of the tyranny of distance from Oakland, perhaps because of pre-existing ideological and other tensions, his relationship with Newton was deteriorating rapidly. Kathleen Cleaver maintained that her spouse’s defense of ji Jaga “had precipitated the so-called ‘split’ in the Central Committee and [fractionalization].”¹⁸⁹ The dispute was seen as a difference in approach with Cleaver apparently more willing to continue armed confrontations. Again, this may have been an extension of the North-South split in the Golden State, as the spider webs of freeways, the immense distances (these two factors making it easier to flee after attacks), the more militarized police, the conservatizing presence of Orange County and San Diego and the larger Black population, made it easier for Southland comrades to pursue a more aggressive course.

Wayne Pharr, a Southland comrade, observed that “Huey was taking us to unimaginable lows” and “wanted to destroy the Southern California chapter,” an outgrowth of the beef with ji Jaga in particular. Still, when Tommy Harper of this targeted chapter tried to use explosives to blow up the Compton police station, Cleaver was in Algiers. Sufficient motivation was provided by examples like Gardena and Torrance, where the “real redneck pigs worked,” precipitating comrades to devise a surprise attack on them. Or the motivation was provided by the LAPD, which had a “regular habit of picking brothers up for no reason and driving around for an hour or two beating them, then making a stop at a hospital to get them a little patched up before hauling them off to jail.” Mark Essex, who quite famously killed a handful of cops in New Orleans during the heyday of the BPP, had received military training in San Diego.¹⁹⁰

Elaine Brown added another twist. Speaking from L.A. in December 1969 she found that it “isn’t difficult to live half way decently as a Black person” there “because rents are lower” than elsewhere. She found the Southland to be “unique.”¹⁹¹

As noted, Southland authorities perceived that there were not enough cops to adequately cover such a sprawling area, so they compensated by engaging in draconian deterrence, roughhousing even innocents so as to send the message to avoid at all costs dealing with the men in blue.¹⁹²

188. Cleaver, *Target Zero*, 253, 254, 255.

189. Remarks of Kathleen Cleaver, in Cleaver, *Target Zero*, xxv.

190. Pharr, *Nine Lives*, 233, 152, 163. See also Peter Hemon, *A Terrible Thunder: The Story of the New Orleans Sniper*, New Orleans: Garrett County Press, 2005. See also *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 9 Jan. 1970: “Young Black man...carrying a time bomb...killed...device went off outside Compton police [station].” Tommy Harper, Jr., 23, is “literally blown apart.”

191. *People’s World*, 27 December 1969.

192. Home, *Fire this Time*, passim.

Certainly, the slayings in Chicago of Panther leaders Fred Hampton and Mark Clark and the assault on the BPP in Los Angeles in December 1969, a few days apart, were traumatizing, bound to induce frayed nerves and skewed analyses. Newton then began to speak of Cleaver as the "hidden traitor" and "renegade scab," while other comrades were hostile to his ties to "hippies" and "yippie[s]" and his endorsement of the "Days of Rage" in Chicago in October 1969, described as "Custeristic,"¹⁹³ a barbed reference to the U.S. military man massacred with his men at the Little Big Horn in 1876 by Indigenes.

Newton wrote an entire manuscript upbraiding Cleaver as the ultimate "hidden traitor" and "renegade scab," but Bantam Books found it to be "blatantly a hatchet job."¹⁹⁴ This may have been a euphemism. Newton accused Cleaver of being a victim of "homosexual panic and a pseudo sexuality" leaving him terribly damaged. He retold the story of how he once greeted James Baldwin with a passionate kiss and sorrowfully told of a Berkeley mother who says Cleaver raped her 14-year-old daughter, then stating cruelly and sadistically, "I only wish that she had been twelve years old."¹⁹⁵

Despite his crimes and peccadilloes, Cleaver continued to be treated seriously as a political leader. Such was the case in December 1969 when he arrived in Rabat, Morocco, for the Fifth Arab Summit as a delegate from the BPP. The White House found that he had a "'big 'discussion with [Yasir] Arafat," Palestinian principal. The leading Algerian periodical concurrently carried an interview with Cleaver where he assailed Israel.¹⁹⁶ J. Edgar Hoover uncovered what he saw as a "close relationship...between the violence prone [BPP] and the Al Fatah," Arafat's group.¹⁹⁷ White House aide Jeb S. Magruder chose mudslinging,

193. Statements, December 1969, Reel 30, Black Panther Documents.

194. Greg Armstrong to Lubell law firm, 23 June 1972, Reel 30, Black Panther Documents. See Huey P. Newton, "Hidden Traitor Renegade Scab," 1972, Reel 15, Black Panther Documents. Interview with Newton, March-May 1972, Reel 12, Black Panther Documents: "George Jackson s Cleaver a letter signed by Ulysses McDaniel, Clifford Jefferson (two of the oldest and most respected Black partisans in the California prison system) and himself asking Cleaver to show proof that he was not a 'compulsive disrupter or agent provocateur'...an infantile leftist." See also *Muhammad Speaks*, 16 March 1973: Future Congressman, then a Panther, Bobby Rush, denounces Cleaver.

195. Newton ms., 1972, Reel 30, Black Panther Documents. See also Interview with Newton in *Playboy* magazine, unclear date, ca. 1973, Reel 17, Black Panther Documents: He repeats the story of Cleaver "engaged" with Baldwin in early 1967 at a San Francisco party "in a long passionate French kiss." His dispute with Cleaver turned, he says, on the immediate feasibility of "Armed Struggle." Cleaver was a "disturbed and unhappy person" and the "gun was a substitute for his penis." Rape is a "Social Disorder" not a "revolutionary act." See also Remarks by Newton, August 1973, Reel 12, Black Panther Documents: Cleaver said to be a "repressed homosexual." Cf. Remarks by Wilhelmina Cleaver in L.A., undated, Reel 12: "No doubt that Cleaver considers Newton his enemy.... Feelings are justified...as Eldridge's sister...I bathed him, diapered him, gave him his first haircut."

196. FBI Memorandum, 7 January 1970, Box 19, White House Special Files, SMOF, John Ehrlichman Papers-RNPL. See also *El Mujahid*, 30 December 1969.

197. J. Edgar Hoover to John Ehrlichman, 7 January 1970, Box 19, John Ehrlichman Papers-RNPL.

"carefully distributing ...[defaming] information" on the BPP to "certain selected columnists who will not divulge [the] very delicate nature of [the] source."¹⁹⁸

198. Jeb S. Magruder to John R. Brown III, 7 February 1970, Box 19, John Ehrlichman Papers-RNPL.

Chapter 13

Armed Self Defense! 1969-1972

By 1970 the much-bludgeoned U.S. left—spearheaded by the BPP and CP—seemed to be on the verge of replicating the great leap forward of the 1930s and early 1940s. Yes, the BPP was being roughhoused by the authorities, with many ending up in a premature grave—or if they were lucky, behind bars. But the Algiers legation seemed to represent a new departure for the Black Liberation Movement, in many ways, the locomotive of radicalism. As the party paper put it, this was “the first time in the history of [the] 400 year long struggle of Black people” that “we have established representation on the official level on the international stage” of this “domestic colony.”¹

As for the CP, the bursting on the domestic, then global scene of Angela Y. Davis recharged the batteries of the CP in a manner barely scene since the Smith Act trials of the 1950s. There was cooperation too, with Davis and William Patterson being bridges between the BPP and CP but, as it turned out, there were contradictions that were difficult to overcome, such as the growing rift between Communists in China and elsewhere, the political estimate about fascism’s arrival and/or potential in the U.S., and the related matter of the feasibility of armed struggle.

* * *

In 1969 Dorothy Healey was still in the driver’s seat in the CP in the Southland but there were signs that this was not a long-term proposition. She did not get along with William Taylor, the Nevisian who, like her, had performed credibly in local elections. Reverberations from the Smith Act trial continued to haunt the organization as potential members suspected that subscribing to their publications or signing membership cards would somehow find their way to the FBI, meaning harassment—or worse. Ideological fissures had not disappeared

1. *The Black Panther*, 26 September 1970.

either, often manifested in nettlesome foreign policy disputes: China, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Israel, etc. Yet a dearth of clarity on the crucial matter of settler colonialism meant an underestimation of class collaboration and difficulty, for example, in figuring out the stunning vote totals for segregationist George Wallace in 1968 and 1972, the election of Birchers, etc. Clarity here would have made simpler their ability to provide guidance to other forces, ostensibly a principal goal.

Thus, in reporting to the comrades in April 1969, to Healey the Soviet interventions—Budapest 1956 and Prague 1968—continued to irk. China emerged too: the “dependency of this party upon the Soviet Union” was seen by some as undue. “Sharp debate” ensued about Prague. Domestically, the estimate she presented about the BPP was mixed: “in some cities” they “represent a more advanced social program” but “have not, for a variety of reasons, been able to fulfill this role in many cities, including Los Angeles.” She did not spare her comrades, particularly James Jackson, editor of the main party organ, which “carried vitriolic attacks on Malcolm X and our District was alone in criticizing them,” a legacy of the late Cyril Briggs. “When the party stands alone in its attitude towards a man who is a hero to Black radicals, then there is something wrong.” What was wrong in part was a tendency to fold Black Americans too easily into an overarching U.S. identity, ignoring their understandable longings for Africa—which should have been directed toward anti-imperialism. For Healey, this Jackson approach was “right opportunism,” the trend that had led down the road of party liquidation under Earl Browder’s leadership in 1944. Shockingly, she was self-critical, acknowledging that “these younger comrades had a valid point in their criticism of me.” She did not include in this self-critique the estimate of Tom Bradley, the ex-cop who ran a strong race for City Hall in 1969 before his ultimate 1973 triumph: His near triumph, she contended, was “more important in the fight against racism, than [Richard] Hatcher’s” in Gary, Indiana, or Carl Stokes in Cleveland.²

Party leader Gus Hall wasn’t universally popular in the Southland—or with Healey—and his visits there showed as much, with much of the fury based on his backing of the Soviet intervention in Prague.³

2. Report, 4 April 1969, Box 21A, Dorothy Healey Papers, CSU Long Beach.

3. Report, 5 April 1969, Box 21B, Dorothy Healey Papers, CSU Long Beach. Speaking before Long Beach Young Democrats at the Unitarian Church, 5450 Atherton St., she was cited as defending the building of the Berlin Wall as a “necessity”; the observer found that ensuing “questions were becoming quite heated...quite emotional”: “Confidential” FBI Report, ca. April 1965, Box 3, Dorothy Healey Papers-UCLA. In the same collection and box, see the FBI report, 26 December 1968, 100-4486: William Taylor was listed as the “only” Southland Red “who endorsed the statement of Hall” in Prague: “This will tend to widen the disagreement in policy between Taylor and Healey which has been previously very much in evidence” which “threatens to destroy the unity of the CP.” Also, in this box is: *Los Angeles Times*, 18 October 1969: Healey “ousted from Red post,” with Prague being at

Even her mixed view of the BPP was not necessarily embraced statewide. The San Francisco CP in April 1970 issued a "policy statement on defense of Political Prisoners" which presented a positive depiction of the BPP: "Some 2 million Black people today consider themselves to be revolutionists"—an extraordinary evaluation by any measure—and therefore rejected firmly the "fascist assaults" on the party. That Governor Reagan had demanded a "bloodbath" was "not a slip of the tongue" but, dialectically, had heightened anti-fascism and revolutionism.⁴

The pressures Healey faced were glimpsed when Franklin Alexander addressed the comrades at a fundraiser for the party periodical. Billed as Chairman of the Che-Lumumba Club of the CP, he addressed gathering BPP tensions with his party that soon were to explode disastrously. He found Patterson "unintentional but condescending" and Newton "unnecessarily vicious" as he positioned himself—and presumably, his club comrades—midway: this was extraordinary. He too uncovered "right opportunist" trends amidst "elements of white chauvinism." Cleaver's presence in Algiers had contributed to the "attempt to view the Algerian-French situation" as analogous to the plight of Black Americans, which he rejected. He also rebuked the "unequal and dishonest relationship" between the BPP and "white radicals whose use value is measured by their financial donations." Then there was the "question of guns"—the "Panthers take an equally romantic and non-practical view." Still, he praised the "armed self-defense" exhibited in December 1969, designed to "hold the beasts off," in that "arms were the tool for defense—they were not the catalyst," and importantly "brought 10,000 Black people to City Hall in the middle of the week." He had little use for Roy Wilkins and his "typically whining style" after he assailed Huey Newton, who had recommended that Blacks join the National Liberation Front in Vietnam. As for the heralded free breakfast program featuring "many a sleepy Panther getting up" early to scramble eggs, there was "very lit organizing" to accompany this "fine social work." Crucially—and this off separated Communists from Panthers—he denied adamantly that fascism then existed in the U.S.⁵ ("Racism breeds fascism in Orange County" was a typical Panther aphorism.)⁶

The response to the December siege was heartening. A Committee United for Political Prisoners was knocked together with State Senator Dymally, Jane Fonda, John Mack of the Urban League and the Reverend Richard Bass, president of the NAACP in L.A. in the leadership—though, said Judy Shayne, "attendance at

issue. Also here is FBI Report, 7 August 1970: Healey no longer a CP leader, not reelected to National Committee and resigns as Chair of the Southland CP.

4. Policy statement of San Francisco CP, 15 April 1970, Box 255, CPUSA Records-NYU.

5. Remarks by Alexander, 11 October 1970, Reel 16, Black Panther Documents.

6. *The Black Panther*, 2 May 1970.

Board meetings has been low and inconsistent.”⁷ Famed photographer, then film director Gordon Parks was not there—but he was seeking to reach Hilliard and Donald Cox for a portrait; the FBI recorded him as requesting them to sport leather jackets. Their purported response? “They had them but no longer wore the uniform.”⁸ However, Parks’s fellow celebrated artiste James Baldwin turned up with 2000 others at Hollywood High School—“mostly white high school youth,” said an observer—for Newton’s birthday celebration.⁹ Baldwin, who performed yeoman duty on the party’s behalf, visited Newton in prison, then reported at length.¹⁰

A problem faced by this grouping and others, as “Comrade Huey” was told in September 1970, was expressed in the organizing on the Panthers’ behalf in Ventura. There was a “hard time raising much money,” said Judy Shayne, though they thought they had secured a “big house” owned by “Dr. Irv Lichtenstein,” a vice-president of the American Civil Liberties Union who “wasn’t convinced that the Panthers weren’t anti-Semitic.” Thus, the BPP was “too hot for him politically.” There was a “commitment from Abby Mann” of Hollywood notoriety to “show his film ‘Judgment at Nuremberg,’” a real draw. So, they were now “trying to organize a Hollywood chapter of entertainers who would raise bread. Shirley Sutherland and Burt Lancaster’s daughter, Susan, are in the forefront,” and driving the “four chapters now operating in Los Angeles” backing the BPP.¹¹ (Indicative of the appeal of the BPP was the contact between them and John Lennon).¹²

It was also in 1970 that the Panthers were brokering a pact about a proposed “soundtrack of movie ‘Eldridge,’” focused on Cleaver.¹³ Another Panther film project was initiated by David Castro of American Documentary Films, who had a long history with Cleaver and his party and, he said, “strong relations with all socialist countries.” But he encountered “tremendous harassment of the white film crew” he hired, as “12,000 feet of film was exposed and destroyed by Ron Karenga,”¹⁴ an unspeakable vandalizing of history.¹⁵

By early 1970 there was widespread questioning of the credence of the portly philosopher. “Most whites would rather see a Black man wearing a daishiki than carrying a gun,” like the Panthers. “Even on the international scene,” said this

7. Account of Meeting, 3 September 1970, Reel 16, Black Panther Documents.

8. FBI Report, 6 November 1970, Reel 18, Black Panther Documents.

9. *People’s World*, 23 February 1969.

10. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 27 March–2 April 1970.

11. Judy Shayne to “Comrade Huey,” 16 September 1970, Reel 16, Black Panther Documents.

12. John Lennon to BPP, ca. 1970, Carton 5, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

13. David Lubell to Elaine Brown, 13 October 1970, Reel 30, Black Panther Documents.

14. David Castro to David Lubell, 23 November 1970, Reel 30, Black Panther Documents.

15. See also David Lubell to David Gillis of Winterfilm, 14 April 1971, Reel 30, Black Panther Documents: “17,000 feet of 16 mm color film of the Revolutionary Constitutional Convention” in Washington in November 1970; subsequently mentioned: “1600 feet of printed film.”

writer, "the Negritude of Leopold Senghor (president of Senegal) is found less repulsive than the militant internationalism and African Socialism of Kwame Nkrumah." In sum, Karenga's "US is considered a lesser evil than the Panthers," with "membership" of the former, already not large by design, "on the decline."¹⁶

This decline was not altogether self-induced. In May 1970 their office at 4611 W. Santa Barbara was bombed in what was portrayed as a "near atomic explosion,"¹⁷ which was devastating in more ways than one. Then two Black men described as the "Massengale brothers" were bombed by Karenga's comrades after they had departed the ranks of the US organization.¹⁸

Relatedly, the FBI sent "secret" intelligence via Henry Kissinger to the White House about Newton's bodyguard, Robert Bay, supposedly "plotting...revenge killings" against Karenga's comrades.¹⁹ The FBI in L.A. was overjoyed, observing that "When Karenga receives this item, it will further increase the tensions between the BPP and the 'US' organization."²⁰ Just as the BPP office was being shot up in December 1969, the FBI was told happily that ji Jaga wanted to confer with organizations but the "US organization is excluded."²¹ For BPP continued its war of words—and other weapons—against Karenga, portrayed as among "L.A.'s bootlicker[s]," i.e., "power hungry [n-words] like Al Cannon, Hiawatha Harris," seen as his comrades.²² Other erstwhile comrades of Karenga were implicated in a power struggle, as two former colleagues were ambushed in the View Park neighborhood by the proverbial unknown assailants—with shotguns.²³

Soon Karenga himself was being interrogated for what was described as his forte—"Asian type torturing"—with him damagingly cited for the proposition that "Vietnamese torture is nothing compared to what I know." Of course, he feared poisoning.²⁴ One Black correspondent wondered why he hired "white lawyers" given his professed ideology.²⁵ Communist scribe Ronald Stevenson was unsympathetic to his ideology, as he urged that a "ruthless struggle must be waged in the Black community against the Cultural Nationalists."²⁶

Reeling under the pressure, serious charges then emerged against Karenga himself, placing him behind bars. A young Black woman, Deborah Jones, joined

16. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 16-22 January 1970.

17. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 14 May 1970.

18. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 28 May 1970.

19. Report, 20 January 1970, White House Special Files, SMOF, Box 19, John Ehrlichman Papers-RNPL.

20. FBI Report, 18 September 1969, Reel 18, Black Panther Documents.

21. FBI Report, 9 December 1969, Reel 18, Black Panther Documents.

22. *The Black Panther*, 12 September 1970.

23. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 27 August 1970.

24. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 8 October 1970.

25. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 15 October 1970.

26. *People's World*, 14 March 1970.

his ranks in 1969 and moved into his abode that then housed his wife. (The scholar Scot Brown writes that Karenga had a "patriarchal conception of the Black family," citing him for the proposition that "male supremacy is based on three things...tradition, acceptance and reason.")²⁷ By 1970 it was said that he accused comrades of seeking to kill him. Weapons were unsheathed including an "electric cord, soldering iron, a karate stick and a revolver." A "Miss Davis was ordered to take off all her clothing and to lie down on the concrete floor" after she was ordered at "gunpoint to the garage." She was "beaten with an electric cord until her back became bloody...she was turned over and was beaten across her breasts and thighs," then "defendant Smith," said Raymond C. Brown of the Adult Authority, was "instructed to place a soldering iron in Miss Davis' mouth...holding it against her tongue...then placed against the side of Miss Davis' face," as "Karenga was in and out of the garage during the...episode" saying, "I don't want to do this to you, you know." There was discussion about escalating to murder and the following day "detergent powder was placed into the mouth of the victim" and water "was placed in the victim's rectum." Karenga returned and "proceeded to beat the victim across the back and over the head" and "struck the victim in the ear with his fist" and "made a statement about blinding her." Then his spouse fled "because of her deathly fear of Mr. Karenga." Karenga, it was said, "has been psychotic and is currently a psychotic in remission," but "he evades the seriousness of his behavior," leading to the "unanimous" conclusion by the authorities that he was a "threat to the free community. He was "convicted in the Superior Court of Los Angeles County by jury for the offense of assault with force."²⁸ This 19-day trial featured a jury of six Blacks, five Euro-Americans and one Chicano. The emphasis in one account was how the chief defendant "filled" victims' "mouths with detergents."²⁹

Press coverage, especially in the *Herald-Dispatch*, was lurid. He had a "Napoleonic complex," it was said. "Beatings and tortures" upon two Black women were "medieval." They were held as "captives" at 9801-11th Ave., where Karenga "applied pressure to...eyeballs."³⁰ The *Herald-Dispatch* termed him a "sadist" and "woman torturer" with macabre techniques "unknown since the Spanish Inquisition" executed by a "fiendish monstrosity," constituting a "threat to Black society."³¹ "Karenga's wife tells all at trial," said another headline. She "testified that she watched helplessly as two young women were tortured," referring to "Brenda Lorraine Karenga." She said he "sat on a victim's stomach

27. Scot Brown, *Fighting for US*, 33.

28. Raymond C. Brown, Chairman of Adult Authority to Assemblyman Charles Warren, 24 May 1973, Mervyn Dymally Papers.

29. *Los Angeles Herald Dispatch*, 3 June 1971.

30. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 8 October 1970. See *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 23 September 1971: A torture victim could not be found.

31. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 24 June 1971.

to hold her down while a hose was used to force water down her mouth...she heard screams," as he was "obsessed with the idea that someone was trying to poison him."³²

Defendants also included Fred Glover, Louis Smith, and Luz Maria Tamaya, also named as "Luce Maria Tomayo," then Luz Maria Everett-Karenga, née Tamayo. The verdict was guilty of "assault by means of force likely to produce...bodily injury...felony...assault with a deadly weapon...false imprisonment...affected by violence and menace." The jury deliberated for three days, rendering a verdict on 29 May 1971 with a motion for a new trial rejected on 21 June. Earlier there was forfeit of a bond on 6 October 1970 put up by Celes King, NAACP dissident, for Karenga and Ms. "Tamayo."³³ By July 1971 a comrade told a Newton intimate that "Our 'friend' Ron Karenga is in a psychiatric ward" in San Luis Obispo "behind the conviction of torturing two young beautiful ladies. That is a coward bag."³⁴ By April 1972 Ken Msemaji was reporting that Karenga was "now serving a 1 to 10 year sentence."³⁵ Unfortunately, Karenga was under severe pressure and not just from the BPP. In Atlanta in 1970 there was showdown between his forces and those of his erstwhile comrade, Le Roi Jones/Amiri Baraka, that almost ended fatally, as US folk were defecting to the side of the Newark leader.³⁶

The BPP too had its own setbacks, as the counter-reaction to their advance was sharp and pervasive. When composer Leonard Bernstein hosted a fundraiser in 1970 for the BPP, popular conservative writer Tom Wolfe wrote a book-length evisceration, bequeathing to the language the still trenchant phrase "Radical Chic"—intended to shame the affluent who might otherwise be moved to lend a hand to the oppressed, while terrifying them with the prospect that the well-heeled were actually funding the "Mau Mau," nickname for the fearsome Kenyan liberation movement designed to plunge settler colonialism into upheaval.³⁷ George Schuyler, infamous Negro conservative, was also outraged by this fundraiser where, he said, 90 were present, including Comrade Donald Cox, who was to wind up in exile in Algiers and France, and others identified as "Mrs. Vincent Astor, Mrs. August Hecksher [sic], Mrs. Arthur Krim," and others. Filmmaker Otto Preminger was said to complain bitterly when Cox suggested that the U.S. "is the most oppressive country in the world." Schuyler was enraged that \$10,000 was contributed to these "criminals...of the worst sort," little more than

32. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 20 May 1971.

33. See the Case file, Roll 183, A264488-264709, A264545, *People v. Everett-Karenga*, et al., Los Angeles County Archives. See conclusion: Karenga suffers from "mental illness-paranoia."

34. Booker Lewis to "Dear Gwen," 10 July 1971, Reel 63, Black Panther Documents.

35. Ken Msemaji to State Senator Dymally, 19 April 1972, Mervyn Dymally Papers.

36. Scot Brown, *Fighting for US*, 126, 127.

37. Tom Wolfe, *Radical Chic and Mau-Mauing the Flak Catchers*, New York: Picador, 2009. See also Gerald Home, *Mau Mau in Harlem? The U.S. and the Liberation of Kenya*, New York: Palgrave, 2009.

"enemies of the state" whose goal, he claimed, was to "burn down cities and murder whites."³⁸

Wolfe and Schuyler may have reacted so hyperbolically because of the presence of Cox. He could be viewed as a saner, and therefore more dangerous version of Cleaver. For as he was sipping cocktails in fashionable Manhattan, he was advocating "organizing self defense groups" with arms: "every Black home," he maintained, "should have at least one .12 gauge shotgun," recalling the "Cuban guerrillas used shotguns very successfully" pre-1959. He also rendered advice on rifles and submachine guns.³⁹

The fundraiser at the home of filmmaker Abby Mann was launched with sizable donations directed toward Charles Garry, who was present along with fellow litigator, Luke McKissack. Attending were Fonda, Dalton Trumbo, Bun Lancaster, Donald Freed—and Donald Kalish, already in the headlines as the man responsible for hiring Angela Davis at UCLA.⁴⁰ Screenwriter and Hollywood royalty Budd Schulberg earlier had been essential in forming the Watts Writers' Workshop, and Louise Meriwether, a local activist, published a novel, *Daddy was a Numbers Runner*, that was produced there.⁴¹ James Baldwin loved her work and so did others: this novel sold a reported 400,000 copies.⁴²

Fonda, a real trooper then,⁴³ joined Hewitt and Garry in a rally at the Embassy Auditorium to free Seale, then ensnared in a lengthy case in New Haven.⁴⁴ (I

38. "The Review of the News," 18 February 1970, Ron Wilkins Papers.

39. "People's Community News," No. 9, ca. 1970, Box 65, CPUSA Records-NYU.

40. Report, 9 September 1970, Reel 16, Black Panther Documents. Fonda was quite courageous then. Cf. Actor Inger Stevens, who died in 1970 and reportedly was wed to Negro businessman Ike Jones. But as his attorney Leo Branton put it, "The industry made it very clear...that if it was brought out she was married to a Black man, she would be through": *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 7 May 1970. Her death was ruled as suicide: *Jet*, 20 August 1970. But then a story appeared that denied she was wed to Jones. It was seeking to marry Euro-American actor Burt Reynolds: *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 14 May 1971. Cf. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 6 August 1970: Isaac Jones ruled to be heir to the estate of Stevens.

41. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 26 July 1970.

42. *Los Angeles Times*, 17 October 2023.

43. Her eventual spouse, Tom Hayden, was subjected to harassment along with her. See Ciri Paya, *Deep Cover: An FBI Agent infiltrates the Radical Underground*, New York: Newsweek, 1979, 33. Agents in Venice "proceeded to smash windows and flatten the tires of Hayden's car." Cf. Larry Grathwohl, *Bringing Down America: An FBI Informer with the Weathermen*, New Rochelle: Arlington House, 1976. See also James Mills, Oral History, 23 July 1992, San Diego History Center. Mills served as State Senator from 1966-1992 after six years in the Assembly. After admitting that he did not support the Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, designed to deliver a form of gender equality, he lambasted Hayden who, he said, was "clearly a Communist in the past" and had attempted to "set up a guerrilla army to fight against the United States, in the United States.... he was trying to collect arms to carry on an insurrection.... he was very enthusiastic about all kinds of terrorist activity including the IRA in Ireland. He was a big supporter of the IRA privately," a grouping that was little more than a "bunch of Marxists." Cf. Tom Hayden, *Irish on the Inside: In Search of the Soul of Irish America*, New York: Verso, 2003.

44. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 5 June 1970. See review by Donald Freed of book on the trial, *Agony in New Haven: Los Angeles Times*, 1 April 1973. Newton also spent time in New Haven communizing

traveled to the Connecticut protest.) Garry needed help. He was attacked in *The New Yorker* for supposedly traducing the august *New York Times* to accept his claim that of late 28 Panthers had been killed by cops; the magazine claimed the figure was 12.⁴⁵ Progressive Black reporter Earl Caldwell said the number was 19.⁴⁶ Donald Freed termed it caustically, "Body Counting the Panthers," and assailed the popular writer Gail Sheehy and her attacks on the BPP and Garry.⁴⁷ Of course, she and others were engaged in a morbid exercise masking deep-seated inhumanity.

Perhaps because Fonda's star power was present, and because the NAACP was perpetually desirous of raising funds in Hollywood, Earl Raines of the Association was at the dais during the "Free Bobby" rally in L.A. Donald Freed quite dramatically described Newton as being "at [the] Finland Station," like a latter-day Lenin headed to the final showdown (another overestimate in retrospect).⁴⁸ "We are eager to see you,"⁴⁹ he told Newton warmly from his battle station in New Haven, where Seale was on trial.

The committee to free Seale had offices throughout the Southland,⁵⁰ doubtlessly a co-factor when Newton left prison in August 1970—and promptly announced the Panthers were heading to Vietnam to fight alongside the National Liberation Front.⁵¹

Yet Freed, Shirley Sutherland and others from the entertainment colony backing the BPP were not universally embraced in the Black community. The idiosyncratic *Herald-Dispatch*, which continued to feature CIA asset Richard Gibson touting other U.S. agents, like UNITA of Angola in their pages, demanded the removal of the BPP from L.A. "Many of our readers disagreed with us," said editor Pat Alexander accurately. The reason for their proposed ouster was precisely Sutherland and Freed, the "mother and father" of the party. Like the yelling "Stop Thief," she ignored the looming presence of Gibson in her pa-

with Yale's Erik Erikson: Said the Oaklander, "I liked Erikson very much": *The Black Panther*, 12 November 1977.

45. A.M. Rosenthal to William Shawn, 23 March 1971, Box 60, Records of New York Times Company, NYPL (abbrev. Times Records).

46. *New York Times*, 21 December 1969. See also Times Records, Case file on Caldwell, ca. 1969-1970, Box 86.

47. Donald Freed, "Body Counting the Panthers," 1971, Reel 15, Black Panther Documents.

48. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 19 June 1970. See also "Fifteenth Report, Un-American Activities in California, 1970," SFSU: Freed denoted as "passionate advocate of violent revolution and the use of explosives and guerrilla warfare" who "described the Panthers as the Black Shock Troops of the Revolution." In October 1969 he and Shirley Sutherland were indicted (she resided then at 1144 Tower Road in Beverly Hills). Freed said to back "Armed Revolution." He played a leading role in "Friends of the Panthers," which met 17 May 1969 at the First Unitarian Church, 2936 West 8th Street, and were addressed by "Masai" Hewitt who assailed Karenga.

49. Donald Freed to Huey Newton, 2 March 1971, Reel 15, Black Panther Documents.

50. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 4 September 1970: There were Seale offices in West L.A., Culver City, Inglewood, Echo Park, Laurel Canyon, Hollywood, Venice, and Santa Monica.

51. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 7-13 August 1970.

and pointed to Freed as "allegedly a CIA agent" who had "successful plays on Broadway." As for Sutherland, she was the "daughter" of the leader of Canada's left-wing New Democratic Party—although it was unclear why this disqualified her.⁵²

Also on the academic front, the young scholar Robert Starobin, son of a former CP personality, donated the royalties from his worthy study of Denmark Vesey, who led a revolt of enslaved in the early 19th century, to the BPP.⁵³ Such donations account for the ability of the party to open yet another site for free breakfasts, this venue at the home of the woman listed as "Mrs. Leona (Be-Be) Murphy at 1002½ East 41st Place."⁵⁴

But chastening was the message from BPP backer Ron Ridenour, who was familiar with "Oak View...a burg of less than 5000...[a] few miles north of Ventura"; he knew of a "dozen or more whites" like himself, supporting the party but "have had their lives seriously threatened" by "right wing murder threats."⁵⁵ This did not bode well for all concerned.

Contrarily, just before this event, 500 gathered at City Hall in L.A. in support of the December 1969 defendants, chained in the courtroom. Their chief counsel was Leo Branton, former CP lawyer during the Smith Act ordeal, and there was no mention of him bolting from the BPP conclusion that the "judicial system" was a "lie" and "farce" and "mockery of justice." In a remarkable display of unity, Hewitt was joined on the dais by Marque Neal of the CP's Che-Lumumba Club, the former University of Southern California footballer turned leftwing priest Blaise Bonpane, future Congressman Julian Dixon, and—stunningly—Earl Raines of the NAACP.⁵⁶ A few weeks later, four of the 19 defendants received bail.⁵⁷ Yet when the BPP did a tally of the comrades facing charges as of February 1970, a high percentage were in the Southland (and interestingly, Seattle).⁵⁸ Thus, by March 1970 Roger "Blue" Lewis, whose pedigree was revealed in his nickname being given to him by the now heroized "Bunchy" Carter, received a ten-year sentence; the party organ said he had been cadre "practically since [the chapter's] inception in February 1968"; his bail totals since January 1969 had been a crippling \$32,000, continuing punishment. Then stalwart "Chip" Fitzgerald was convicted in what was termed derisively as a "four day fascist trial" and sentenced to a stint in the gas chamber.⁵⁹ Born and raised in Compton, he was a Panther soldier in Watts, but was charged with murder of what was termed

52. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 28 February 1970.

53. *The Black Panther*, 28 February 1970.

54. *The Black Panther*, 28 February 1970.

55. Remarks from Ron Ridenour, 14 September 1970, Reel 16, Black Panther Documents.

56. *The Black Panther*, 17 January 1970.

57. *The Black Panther*, 17 February 1970.

58. *The Black Panther*, 21 February 1970.

59. *The Black Panther*, 21 March 1970. For more on Fitzgerald, see *The Black Panther*, 25 July 1970, and 8 August 1970.

deridingly as a "supermarket rent-a-pig."⁶⁰ Convicting him was an all-white jury.⁶¹ These were among the comrades doing hard time, while others were being tortured in the county jail.⁶² "They called the brothers [n-word], pussy cat, monkey...spit in and put glass in the food,"⁶³ said the Panther reporter disgustedly. By August 1970, L.A. Panthers over a 30-month period suffered 11 killed, either by cops or US,⁶⁴ according to one analysis.

As for BPP-CP relations, a delegation from socialist East Germany visited the former's headquarters in Manhattan in July 1970 and made a visit to the heavily Puerto Rican Young Lords' office too—and were escorted to both by a youthful Communist⁶⁵—a recognition of the reality that the CP was a channel to state power abroad. Thus, Kim Il-Sung's telegram in solidarity with the BPP was given a full page in the Panther journal.⁶⁶ The Korean leader was given yet another full-page treatment a few weeks later,⁶⁷ then placed on the front page alongside Ho Chi Minh of Vietnam.⁶⁸ Previously, the party had invited Vietnamese and Chinese delegates to Oakland, along with African delegates to the U.N., to observe Huey Newton's trial.⁶⁹ Thus, the party had seeded the ground when it was revealed publicly that U.S. forces had made an incursion into Cambodia. UCLA erupted and a principal demand was that their school donate to the BPP.⁷⁰ "End the war" was the overriding issue of the student strike that ensued.⁷¹ Perhaps the mixture of the two matters—Panthers and antiwar activism—contributed to the overreaction by campus cops: "[T]he most savage treatment was reserved for minorities," was the accusation: "The walls inside [Campbell] Hall [headquarters of the Ethnic Studies Centers] were smeared with blood" as students staggered and stumbled, "bleeding profusely."⁷²

Then the announcement was made that the BPP was "developing a international staff for the international section" in Algiers: "people who can speak French and Arabic" were desired and those "who can function on a diplomatic level in all languages." The rationale was simple: "We see the need to develop diplomatic machinery for the American Revolution."⁷³

60. *The Black Panther*, 8 August 1970.

61. *The Black Panther*, 21 August 1971.

62. *The Black Panther*, 25 April 1970.

63. *The Black Panther*, 2 May 1970.

64. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 14 August 1970.

65. *People's World*, 1 August 1970.

66. *The Black Panther*, 24 January 1970.

67. *The Black Panther*, 15 March 1970.

68. *The Black Panther*, 3 October 1970.

69. *People's World*, 18 May 1968.

70. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 8 May 1970.

71. Material, 1970, Box 7, Harry Meserve and Marilyn Scronce Collection, SJSU (abbrev. Meserve and Scronce Collection).

72. Report, 12 May 1970, Box 7, Meserve and Scronce Collection.

73. *The Black Panther*, 28 February 1970.

The Algiers legation needed help. By early 1971 Kathleen Cleaver was badgering famed Italian filmmaker Michelangelo Antonioni: "We worked in your film for only a few days," she conceded but now they were in Algiers admittedly with a staff of 20 and a nursery, meaning their "financial condition" was "difficult" at best: "We have no money."⁷⁴ Yet when *New York Times* reporter Eric Pace conferred with Cleaver and the comrades, after handing him copies of apparently requested copies of *Mad* magazine, a sophomoric journal of humor, he confessed: "I furnished them with a lot of drinks,"⁷⁵ likely loosening the exiled Angeleno's already slackened tongue.

Their penury notwithstanding, the legation remained rich in ambition. This serves to explain the meeting with Ms. Cleaver and Donald Cox with the ambassador of the People's Republic of the Congo. They sought to "open an Information Bureau" in Brazzaville, though the comrades were upset that their anti-Moscow stance had come back to haunt them in that the "Soviet Union [is] pressuring other African liberation movements not to relate to the Panthers and the Algerian government [is] attempting to disarm us." (For some reason, Algiers objected to having well-armed U.S. nationals on their soil.) Brazzaville's man wanted to know their plans for uniting diverse forces in the U.S., but since the BPP specialized in berating the CP, SNCC, the NAACP, the US organization, and others, this was not an easy query to answer.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, another strategic triumph was effectuated by the legation when what was described as a "Black Liberation Army delegation" arrived in Brazzaville and promptly forwarded a crucial "Message to the Afro-American People."⁷⁷

The BPP illustrated the dialectic. On the one hand, they had not conducted—or at least publicized—an analysis of the correlation of forces domestically and globally (including whether those beyond Blacks were unprepared to live in the old way) that would justify armed struggle. On the other hand, they performed a meritorious service in pursuit of armed struggle by reaching out to Algeria and especially Congo, the ancestral homeland of many who came to refer to themselves as African-American. Thus, New York Panthers, a corps of whom were predisposed to following Cleaver, publicized Congo in the context of armed

74. Kathleen Cleaver to Antonioni, 2 March 1971, Box 1, Cleaver-TAMU.

75. Eric Pace to "Mr. Freedman," 12 December 1969, Box 60, *Times Records*.

76. Minutes of Meeting, 15 June 1971, Box 1, Cleaver-TAMU. Deacon Alexander was close to Angela Davis and also was part of the "New Breed," an offshoot of the powerful "Slausons" club—or gang—which came into conflict with Irving Davis of SNCC, who led the purge against Franklin Alexander on anticommunist grounds: Report, ca. 1972, Box 46, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard. Bettica Aptheker, who knew of James Forman's relationship to comrade Jessica Mitford—her "son-in-law"—thought he was "generally unhappy" with his "political relations" with the BPP: Aptheker to Angela Davis, 23 January 1971, Box 56, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

77. "Message" from Brazzaville, May 1971, Box 3, Cleaver-TAMU.

struggle.⁷⁸ The New York organ *Right On!* which was close to Cleaver, published useful articles on "Urban Guerrilla Warfare," irrespective of whether one was ready to pick up the gun and don green fatigues. They educated about the Tupamaros of South America, FRELIMO of Mozambique and like forces, as they portrayed the BPP as the "aboveground" and the Black Liberation Army as the "underground."⁷⁹

Buoyed, Cleaver continued to insist that "escalation of violence" was warranted back home, which struck a chord given the rampant police terror and mass incarceration. There was "nothing to reevaluate," he contended repetitively, "except the choice of weapons." To that end, it was reported that Panthers would receive military training from the Palestine Liberation Organization. Yet by March 1971, quite infamously, he had split with Newton on a television call-in program from the Bay Area—I recall being gobsmacked, mouth agape—which then led Cleaver to direct comrades to the airport in Algiers for 24-hour surveillance in case a team of assassins chose to land from Oakland.⁸⁰

Then they conferred with a high-level official in Algiers that brought no surcease.⁸¹ Though she knew that their legation was a "historic breakthrough," Ms. Cleaver was under strain amidst "eight or so families here, mostly with children." Importantly, their "heaviest contact and strongest base" was with the "GIs in Germany," particularly Ramstein.⁸² This may be why in early 1971 the party charged that Kathleen Cleaver was "denied freedom of speech in West Germany."⁸³ *Voice of the Lumpen*, a party-oriented publication, provided publicity to the "Ramstein 2," soldiers who had run afoul of the authorities.⁸⁴ This publication was formed, mostly by soldiers, who claimed to represent the "30,000 Black GIs in West Germany."⁸⁵

Her spouse provided an illuminating interview to a West German publication in 1969 characterizing the party as "Marxist Leninist" and touting the idea of successful guerrilla war in his homeland: "We have the terrain to fight...the United States has more mountains than...Cuba or...Vietnam...at the same time dissatisfaction in the ranks of the [military] is at an all-time peak."⁸⁶ Asked pointblank subsequently if the goal of the party was to overthrow the government,

⁷⁸ *Right On!* 1 (No. 1, 1971), Reel 26, Black Panther Documents: This was a special issue on Congo with armed soldiers on the cover. By 1972, if not before, this publication was on sale in New Jersey, New York, South Carolina, Kentucky and Pennsylvania—but not in California: *Right On!* 1 (31 January 1972), Reel 26, Black Panther Documents.

⁷⁹ *Right On!* 2 (No. 1, 29 February 1972), Reel 26, Black Panther Documents.

⁸⁰ Minutaglio and Davis, *Most Dangerous Man*, 99, 101, 199.

⁸¹ Minutes of Meeting with I. Hossein, 17 June 1971, Box 1, Cleaver-TAMU.

⁸² Kathleen Cleaver to Ken, 7 September 1971, Box 1, Cleaver-TAMU.

⁸³ *The Black Panther*, 13 February 1971.

⁸⁴ *Voice of the Lumpen*, ca. 1971, Reel 26, Black Panther Documents.

⁸⁵ *The Black Panther*, 15 May 1971.

⁸⁶ *The Black Panther*, 11 October 1969, reprinted in Heath, *Black Panther Leaders*, 59.

he spoke as if he had begun envisioning new drapes in the White House: "Washington. Washington, D.C. Because that's where the seat of power is,"⁸⁷ and that's where the party belonged.

The legation was not the sole author of their misfortune. For by 1970 Timothy Leary, "the Pope of Dope," the academic who helped to popularize psychedelic drugs—"turn on, tune in, drop out" he advised, deactivating activism—arrived in Algiers on the lam.⁸⁸ He arrived in October 1970 but by January he was in conflict with the comrades. As he must, given his own praxis, Cleaver acknowledged that "we do not include marijuana" among "harmful drugs," but he still was displeased with their uninvited guest. Leary was no naïf, appearing as a typical Euro-American when he referred to Cleaver and his comrades as "some [n-words] flexing their muscles." Cleaver was on the lookout for "CIA agents masquerading as hippies and tourists," sensing that Leary fit neatly into this perilous category.⁸⁹ Eventually it was reported that his Southern California-based purported drug cult was clearing \$200 million and had in its possession 130 phony passports, about a third of such fake documents then extant. His Brotherhood of Eternal Love was trafficking regularly in tons of hashish, a major export from North Africa and the region.⁹⁰

A writer in the *Los Angeles Free Press* sought to square the circle by reconciling Leary and Cleaver as "Mayakovsky and...Lenin...both aware of their historical importance."⁹¹ So prompted, readers chimed in—against Cleaver and in favor of Leary.⁹² It was a messy divorce between the "Pope of Dope" and the "Black Che Guevara." "I wish him well and Kathleen too," said the flaxen-haired imbiber: "as in all marriages she is the key," he said elliptically. Cleaver was unsure of what he intended in Algiers: "We were never quite sure. To become Command[er]-in-Chief of the Afro-American Liberation Army, apparently."⁹³

All news was not so negative. Expressing solidarity in the aftermath of the December 1969 siege were Nelson Mandela's African National Congress of South Africa and their ally across the border, the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union in what was then Rhodesia. In these heady days, Patterson was accorded ¾ of a page in the BPP journal decrying the fact that "open season" had been "declared on the

87. *The Black Panther*, 11 April 1970, in Heath, *Black Panther Leaders*, 28.

88. See "People Investigating Leary's Lies," 3 October 1974, Box 1, Beverly Axelrod Papers. Leary was appearing before a Grand Jury in Chicago and Orange County. Axelrod was part of this ad hoc group, along with Herbert and Bettina Aptheker.

89. Report, 12 January 1971, MS 23006, Box 206, Eldridge Cleaver Radio Transcript and Letter from Timothy Leary, NYPL-Manhattan. See also Cleaver on Leary, 12 January 1971, Reel 16, *Black Panther Documents*.

90. *Daily Pilot*, 14 January 1974, MS 23002, Box 206, Timothy Leary Arrest File, NYPL.

91. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 5 February 1971.

92. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 19 February 1971.

93. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 18 August 1972.

most militant of Blacks,” i.e. the Panthers.⁹⁴ A few months later, Patterson was given more than half a page to speak similarly,⁹⁵ then another full page in March 1970, when he counseled taking the “Black Genocide Issue before [the] U.N.”⁹⁶ Then a half page in May demanding, “let the people speak to the United Nations.”⁹⁷ Then another full page to the balding Communist as he recounted his genocide campaign of a few decades earlier. For a while there seemed to be a point and counterpoint between Patterson and Cleaver in highlighting or denouncing the CP. When in the same edition—in fact, the next page—Newton and Seale were featured as the first two signatories on a “Petition to the United Nations” charging the U.S. with violating the Genocide Convention,⁹⁸ it appeared that Cleaver’s unwieldy baggage would be tossed overboard.

Patterson’s eminence among Panthers was also seen when previously, he was allowed to declaim—alongside an appealing portrait of him—on “The Black Athlete and Democracy USA.”⁹⁹ Patterson implicitly recognized what was to unfold on the gridiron in 1970 when the racially integrated footballers from the University of Southern California—led by Santa Barbara’s Black star, Sam “Bam” Cunningham—travelled to Tuscaloosa and proceeded to trample the Crimson Tide, helping to spur desegregation. Said one wag, “Blacks have never before run away from white folks like that in Alabama without being shot.”¹⁰⁰ Patterson took to the pages of the *San Francisco Sun-Reporter*, controlled by his friend, NAACP dissident Dr. Carlton Goodlett, to provide the BPP with proper respect, while admitting certain differences.¹⁰¹

When stevedore leader Harry Bridges was slated to speak in Oakland on the anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution in November 1969, the spouse of BPP counsel Charles Garry informed David Hilliard that he “may want to hear him.”¹⁰²

This coziness insured that the FBI—as White House aide John Ehrlichman told J. Edgar Hoover in early 1970—would continue to monitor “Communist Party support of the [BPP].”¹⁰³ Patterson’s conversations with Hilliard continued to be monitored by the FBI.¹⁰⁴ Likewise, when young Black Communist Jarvis Tyner contacted Hilliard about meeting with the Vietnamese in Helsinki he was

94. *The Black Panther*, 17 January 1969.

95. *The Black Panther*, 7 March 1970.

96. *The Black Panther*, 21 March 1970.

97. *The Black Panther*, 2 May 1970.

98. *The Black Panther*, 13 June 1970.

99. *The Black Panther*, 13 December 1969.

100. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 17 September 1970.

101. *San Francisco Sun-Reporter*, 22 March 1969, Reel 57, Black Panther Documents. See also John Burr, S.F. Redevelopment Agency to Officer Rodney Williams, Community Relations Unit, 2 April 1971, Box 36, Joseph Alioto Papers: “Bombing of [BPP headquarters]” on 27 March.

102. Report, 6 November 1969, Reel 17, Black Panther Documents.

103. John Ehrlichman to J. Edgar Hoover, 28 January 1970, White House Special Files, SMOF, Box 19, John Ehrlichman Papers-RNPL.

104. FBI Report, 13 January 1970, Reel 18, Black Panther Documents.

recorded by the FBI as saying that “two tickets are available from New York” to Finland for this journey.¹⁰⁵ Then the well-connected attorney for the CP, Robert Treuhart, was entertaining visitors from France and wanted to introduce Seale and Hilliard to them; according to “Fay” (likely Stender, fellow attorney), “This guy can give you good exposure in France and stuff,”—or so recorded the FBI.¹⁰⁶ This was a good tip, given the support for the party in the hexagonal nation. Leading intellectual Jean Genet appeared at a press conference in L.A. alongside Hewitt, where the message was simple: “Europe is outraged at the persecution” of the Panthers.¹⁰⁷

Yet it seemed that Cleaver, from his perch in Algeria, was bent on saving the FBI money by going after their foes. In a lengthy interview with him in the party periodical in April 1970, he began with boilerplate: “Our party is drawn largely from the lumpen proletariat”—actually prisons, colleges, the military and factories: “We are members of the working class,” he added by way of imagined clarity. But his real target was the “diabolical failure of the American Communist Party,” which he knew since, like other comrades, he “read very widely in Socialist literature. Myself in prison,” he stated, “I had a lot of time to read...Fanon...the Manifesto, Das Capital...Lenin...Mao’s works...Fabian Socialist essays.” In fact, “when I first read Marx I was 18 years old.” As for Moscow, Havana and their North American comrades, he was contemptuous: “they are lagging behind our activities,” and indeed he was “inclined to have rather disastrous relations with the Communist Party in the United States...we consciously barred them” and “even at one point barred them from passing out leaflets in the Black community.” He was also inclined to “come down on them very hard” and “expose them.” There was “bitter conflict” driven not least by the “revisionist attitudes” of Moscow. “We find that certain analyses made by Comrade Kim Il-Sung to be more helpful,” he assayed, because of their “concept of Juche” or self-reliance. Still, he did manage an intriguing analogy for seizing state power: “We’re aiming for Long Island—Long Island controls New York, New York controls [the U.S.] and the [U.S.] controls the world.”¹⁰⁸

This was part of an ideological barrage directed by Cleaver from Algiers. “Marxism has never really dealt with the United States,” while “Marx and Engels were themselves racists,” said Cleaver, ironically echoing the man he often derided, Stokely Carmichael. “Marxist Leninists of our time are also racists.” But China and North Korea were different, while Fanon was praised as a “major Marxist Leninist theoretician.” He went further to equate the “industrial reserve army,” largely the unemployed, with the lumpen “who will make the rebellion.”¹⁰⁹

105. FBI Report, 14 August 1969, Reel 17, Black Panther Documents.

106. FBI Report, 14 August 1969, Reel 17, Black Panther Documents.

107. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 27 March-2 April 1970.

108. *The Black Panther*, 11 April 1970.

109. *The Black Panther*, 6 June 1970.

If there was any consolation for the CP, Cleaver also unloaded on Phil Hutchings of SNCC, lambasting the group's "bourgeois nature" comprised of "loud mouthed Black hippies" pointing to "Ivanhoe Donaldson, Charlie Cobb" and other "arm chair philosophers."¹¹⁰

Cleaver's ideological broadsides, wittingly or not, were rendering him even more isolated, thousands of miles from headquarters in Oakland, than he would be ordinarily. The FBI seized the opportunity to "undercut" him which, they thought, led to an "excellent effect causing Cleaver to expel five BPP international representatives and to become distrustful."¹¹¹ Even before their fissures were formalized, Cleaver already was disputing with Newton. Just before he departed incarceration at San Luis Obispo, he sent a taped message to Algiers, expressing his long-manifested affection for Beverly Axelrod, who was now in a vexatious confrontation over royalties for the bestselling *Soul on Ice*, which she was instrumental in producing. "The Party has very close feelings to Beverly," said Newton. "We respect her as a comrade in arms," words undesigned to woo the growingly addled Cleaver. "We hate to see the kind of friction existing between our revolutionary sister and revolutionary brother...especially over a monetary thing. She's very disturbed, that's an understatement," so Newton the peacemaker chose to "ask you not to modify the contract or cut her out of the 25%" for the book. "Saying this again on a Party or political level," he said from Olympian heights, he requested that Cleaver acknowledge that "Axelrod has contributed much to the Party...she's a Party member since almost the inception of the Party shortly after you came into the Party," he reminded:¹¹² this fair-minded project was bound to alienate the male supremacist Cleaver further.

Patterson was allowed to respond in BPP's pages to Cleaver's scale ripostes and was solicitous, referring to the Panthers as a "force against U. imperialism" and an "extremely significant force," while rebuking "white labor leadership and liberals" which had "been [bought] off or duped." His own party

110. *The Black Panther*, 20 June 1970. Cf. Phil Hutchings to "Dear Huey," 19 April 1971, Reel 36 Black Panther Documents: "Like most people these days in the movement, I am better trying to understand the thinking of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Mao (and others) within the context of present day North America...we're in for long years of hard fighting." See also Discussion of Maoism and Dr. Bruce Franklin at Stanford, 1971, Box 1, Holland Roberts Papers.

111. Memo from Special Agent of FBI-San Francisco, 13 April 1970, Box 21, Roslyn Payne Collection of Black Panther Party FBI Files, NYU (abbrev. Roslyn Payne Collection).

112. Transcript of message from Newton to Cleaver, 9 July 1970, Box 7, Beverly Axelrod Papers. In same collection, Box 1, see also: Undated article about Axelrod: She worked alongside CORE in Louisiana: "I went through the teargassing and the beatings. I saw the Deacons [for Defense]" who inspired the BPP; they were "carrying guns to protect us and I realize that this was what saved us." She "went into partnership with John Bussey Black lawyer who became San Francisco's first Black judge. I was known as [this city's] first Black woman lawyer because I have a dark complexion...I can pass." Cf. FBI File: Interviewed by FBI on 11 January 1956 and denies being a Communist. See also Box 6, Claudia Shropshire, from Jackson, Miss., to Axelrod, 16 February 1965: Re: "Savio case...excellent reference material" in your filing "to which I have little access here."

"had called for unity" and "spoke" out, but the "call though clear was ineffective in the ghetto." The Black community, Patterson wrote, was too much in thrall to the NAACP, which was "anticommunist" and "under the leadership of white philanthropists and their Black sycophants" and was "not prepared or able to wage a militant class struggle," so the BPP filled the "political vacuum." Yet "a program of self-defense no matter how militant in and...of itself, gets an oppressed people nowhere." So, the "party's name was changed: 'for self defense 'was dropped,' and it "called itself a Marxist guided organization. It made the study of Marxism-Leninism compulsory among the leading cadre," which was truly "unprecedented," but they "had not serious appreciation of the relations of forces" and was flooded with "agents" besides. Stressing the gun "brought confusion." Still, the BPP had "weaknesses of growth and not of deterioration," but these "can lead to deterioration" if left unchecked.

Newton was displeased and outdid Cleaver in response, denouncing the elderly Communist's "bourgeois ideology" and proclaiming with contempt that the "Communist Party is no threat." He asked querulously, "Does he [Patterson] mean, we should stop talking about the gun." With furious sarcasm barely contained, he declared, "I see very little difference between their lines and the Democratic Party line, both of which are archaic and ready for their positions in the museum."¹¹³

Asked by Lee Lockwood, a journalist who had conducted a book-length interview with Cleaver, if his vision of "Armed Struggle and Socialist Ideology" was parallel to that of the "Communist International," Newton went on to spear the CP. "We don't like them," he said, "they're so connected up with Moscow" though "they have a good apparatus for raising money"¹¹⁴—which could have been of use to the Panthers barring this verbal war.

Berkeley's Mike Miller congratulated Newton for his "revolutionary criticism of the revisionist William Patterson," a "complete liberal"—an intended insult.¹¹⁵

As shall be seen, the CP was in the process of galvanizing a global movement on behalf of Angela Davis—a legacy of the defunct Comintern—and the BPP was besieged, desperately in need of international solidarity. Cleaver's, then Newton's dearth of diplomacy hampered this solidarity tremendously. The historian Philip S. Foner, who coordinated with the CP, had offered to donate his royalties for his

113. *The Black Panther*, 19 September 1970. In 1968 the FBI was concerned that the CP was slated to "train a 'Black Cadre' during the summer" and doubtlessly was pleased with this sharp exchange: J. Edgar Hoover to Secret Service, 25 June 1968, Box 3, Dorothy Healey Papers-UCLA.

114. Interview with Newton, ca. 1970, Reel 17, Black Panther Documents.

115. Mike Miller (or Milley) to Newton, 12 October 1970, Reel 1, Black Panther Documents.

Panther book to the BPP, but such deals became less likely after this inter-party rift became obvious.¹¹⁶

Then there were FBI attempts to stir a hornet's nest within the BPP itself. In 1970 Hoover was told of the "possibility of opposition within the BPP because of [Newton's] liberal attitudes toward homosexual organizations." The proposal?

"Mail two anonymous letters to David Hilliard concerning Newton's stand on homosexuality," while a "cooperative press, radio or television interview might be utilized to effectively drive a wedge between Newton and Eldridge Cleaver."¹¹⁷

Perforce, these FBI dirty tricks would have maximum force in the Golden State. The CP periodical on the West Coast continued to be heavily dependent on the Southland for survival: That same year, 1970, Los Angeles had the biggest quota by far—\$36,500—to San Francisco's \$8500 and Alameda's [Oakland-Berkeley's] \$5500.¹¹⁸ Similarly, by 1970 the BPP had far more offices in L.A. than Oakland or San Francisco and one less than New York City.¹¹⁹ After the December 1969 setback, L.A. Panthers opened a new free breakfast site and a free medical clinic, and also initiated a busing program for families to visit the incarcerated, also a sign of what was befalling cadre.¹²⁰

By May 1970 the BPP organ had a circulation of 139,000, according to the FBI, delivering a goodly percentage of their funding.¹²¹ This was mandatory since, as Newton recalled later, "in the first four years of the party," by 1970, "we had been forced to raise several million dollars in bail around the country"—not to mention operating expenses for cadre, offices, programs, etc.¹²² By June 1970, the FBI found that 141,000 copies of this paper were being printed with 21,000 headed to Chicago alone. They wondered how this could be sabotaged and mused about a replay of events two decades earlier: "targeting the BPP under the Smith Act."¹²³

116. P.S. Foner to David Lubell, 17 February 1970, and Lubell to Foner, 20 November 1970, Reel 52, Black Panther Documents.

117. Special Agent-San Francisco to J. Edgar Hoover, 8 September 1970, Reel 18, Black Panther Documents. Cf. *The Black Panther*, 11 February 1978, Newton: "When I came out of prison in August 1970 the party was in a shambles...the party was heading down the road to revolutionary suicide. Under the influence" of Cleaver, the party "had defected from the community." *The Black Panther*, 4 February 1978: Retrospectively, Newton added that "we saw ourselves as the revolutionary 'vanguard,'" and this may have created the opening for Cleaver's ultra-leftism, he speculated.

118. *People's World*, 8 August 1970.

119. *The Black Panther*, 9 May 1970: The offices were at 2043 Stockwell St., with a Watts office at 1810 E. 103rd St.; there was a Pope Community Center at 1511 E. 153rd and a National Committee to Combat Fascism office at 334 W. 55th.

120. *The Black Panther*, 31 May 1970. See also lawsuit, BPP v. [Mayor] Yorty, Box 33, Hugh Manes Papers-UCLA: Medical treatment for the imprisoned.

121. Churchill and VanderWall, *COINTELPRO Papers*, 159.

122. Newton, *Revolutionary Suicide*, 287.

123. Special Agent-San Francisco to J. Edgar Hoover, 4 June 1970, 100-448006, Carton 24, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

In a sense, this dream was realized in Manhattan with the so-called "Panther 21" trial. As in L.A. two decades earlier, the prosecutor in a soporific monotone read into the record lengthy excerpts from the book *Urban Guerrilla Warfare* with these words imputed to the defendants. This was not "remotely connected with any specific charge in the indictment," fumed supporters, while "jurors who managed to stay awake during the lengthy reading" were not many. Defendant Afeni Shakur carped that the state was using the "most imaginative Hollywood scripts." Also entered into the record, however, was an article from the party newspaper on "how to make and use bombs."¹²⁴ But prosecutors exceeded the efforts of their peers from the movie capital when they decided to show the jury a two-and-a-half-hour docudrama, *The Battle of Algiers*, about the liberation struggle against settler colonialism, which the Panthers used for political education. "Four police spies," said party backers, chose to "testify as [to] the use of this film" for wrongdoing.¹²⁵ (Across the continent in L.A. at the trial of Panthers, a 30-minute film of the December 1969 raid was shown the jury, amid posters in their headquarters of Lenin, Mao, Marx, Newton—and Cleaver.)¹²⁶

A witness testified that this film was used for "political education" and, it was said, "16 members (and/or infiltrators)" were "present and the class had been told it was 'mandatory' they all see the film." Defendant Lumumba Shakur was implicated as watchers were told that the tactics of the film were those too of the BPP.¹²⁷

Nonplussed but bursting with pride, the BPP paper termed itself as the "greatest and baddest newspaper ever produced by Blacks and for Blacks in specific and the world at large,"¹²⁸ irrespective of courtroom film screenings.

Then the inevitable occurred: "Repression of the Black Panther newspaper" shouted the headline as bundles of this organ were seized, then "lost." Distribution nationally and globally involved placing them on airlines—and then these corporations began "working in cahoots" in sabotage. Then regulations materialized that said comrades "can't sell after daylight," with other jurisdictions asserting that one "must have [a] permit" to sell. There was a fire in a San Francisco warehouse tied to the party, while Sylvester Bell had been "murdered in the streets" of San Diego as newspapers were being sold.¹²⁹

Akin to the above, airlines enlisted in the war against the Panthers. At Dulles airport on the outskirts of Washington, D.C., American Airlines and what were called "local and federal pigs...denied 14 delegates of the Revolutionary People's

124. "Panther 21 Trial News," 19-22 October 1970, Box 1, BPP Harlem Records.

125. "Panther 21 Trial News," 2-5 November 1970, Box 1, BPP Harlem Records.

126. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 22 July 1971.

127. "Panther 21 Trial News," 9-12 November 1970, Box 1, BPP Harlem Records.

128. *The Black Panther*, 11 July 1970.

129. *The Black Panther*, 27 July 1970.

Constitutional Convention transportation back to Los Angeles": Comrades were "stranded," their efficacy nullified.¹³⁰

Complaints trickled in about harassment of those peddling the paper. Newspaper distributors were regularly being arrested on specious grounds.¹³¹ In September Pat Thomas and another comrade, "Gail...were selling papers in front of the Boy's Market on Tamarind Blvd. in Compton" when they were harassed by a "rent-a-pig," private security whose numbers exploded exponentially during this conflicted era.¹³² Shortly thereafter comrades were said to be "conducting propaganda among the masses" near Manual Arts High School, but then "bootlicking capitalist and rent-a-pig abuse brothers." The same occurred at liquor stores at the intersection of Imperial Highway and Watts Avenue: "Uncle Toms began to physically abuse the brothers," causing the comrades to "use bottles to defend themselves."¹³³

At a secondary school, they were protesting the presence of the man identified as "lackey principal Peters" who was "going wild" as he ambled, inspiring "harassment by fool teachers"; anticipating the 21st century, already this maniacal staff were armed with ".38 revolvers." The school was "reminiscent of a prison—high fences, gates, pig guards and jive administrators"—as if they were preparing teenagers for a brutal future. "Red devils," illicit drugs, were being "poured onto this campus," keeping students and staff disoriented. "Students have been dropping red devils to escape all this oppression," not unlike prison too.¹³⁴ (The *Herald-Dispatch* turned this against the BPP since "narcotics users" were said to be almost tantamount to being party members: "When people are taking those dope pills, they are dangerous."¹³⁵) Centennial was scored similarly as a "maximum security high school" after 11 students, seven of whom were BSI' members, were detained.¹³⁶ At Venice High School, a boycott over the dress code and poor cafeteria food took place.¹³⁷

That same year the polemicist Mark Lane recounted how J. Edgar Hoover called Newton the "most dangerous man in America" and his party as the "most dangerous force."¹³⁸ Inexorably, the FBI was associating the party with what even the BPP termed audaciously "Guerrilla War in the USA." They published a map of the nation with acts of insurgency concentrated in the Southland not least. "During 1970 there were 85 attacks on government property, 28 on corporations, 62 on capitalist and lackeys' homes, 192 on high schools...280 on colleges...423

130. *The Black Panther*, 19 December 1970.

131. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 12 October 1970.

132. *The Black Panther*, 26 September 1970.

133. *The Black Panther*, 3 October 1970.

134. *The Black Panther*, 24 October 1970.

135. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 21 March 1970.

136. *The Black Panther*, 26 December 1970.

137. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 23 October 1970.

138. Lane interview with Newton, 17 September 1970, Reel 15, Black Panther Documents.

on pig stations...101 on military installations." The latter—revealingly—"outnumber[ed] those that occurred in Saigon for the same period."¹³⁹ From 1970 to 1973 there were a reported 100 grand juries in 36 states and 84 cities with 1000 persons subpoenaed allegedly in light of these developments.¹⁴⁰ It was also in 1970 that a spectacularly damaging trend was initiated: From then until 2000 the incarcerated population soared from 300,000 to 2 million, with Blacks and Latinos constituting over half of those thrust into this wretchedness.¹⁴¹

Even some Panthers may not have recognized this government offensive as reflecting an estimate of the party's strength, which was also a function of their globalized presence. There was not only the Algiers legation, but solidarity committees in France, Britain, Denmark, Belgium, Holland, West Germany, and Sweden. In this, Connie Matthews, one of their more competent operatives, played an essential role. There was a concerted effort nationally to organize self-defense groups with instruction on handling revolvers: "unloading...loading...cocking."¹⁴²

In fact, Hoover was sitting astride a political volcano in 1970 that was far beyond the formidability of both Newton and the Panthers. By November Folsom and to a degree Soledad faced inmate strikes with prison industries shut down. Their "manifesto" declared that "We the inmates...have vested the power of negotiations" in Newton and Garry—and Sal Candelaria of the Brown Berets. Their demands included that Seale and his comrades, "Chip" Fitzgerald and the Soledad Brothers, "be given political asylum outside this country."¹⁴³

Once more, campuses joined prisons as sites of unrest. Black Studies at U.C.-Riverside was "dissolved," said a reporter, stoking fury.¹⁴⁴ The UCLA basketball phenomenon to be known as Kareem Abdul-Jabbar was among those outraged over allegations of racism he was denied an apartment in tony Malibu.¹⁴⁵ One of the most protest-ridden campuses was UC-Santa Barbara. The breeding ground was the youth "ghetto" adjoining the campus, the municipality of Isla Vista, described as a "cross between Levittown and Hooverville."¹⁴⁶ (I resided within walking distance of this town from 1988 to 1995.) FBI informant Cril Payne said the town "looked like a militant, revolutionary community whose inhabitants appeared hostile, suspicious and defiantly radical." He added, hauntingly, "I doubt there was a single demonstration, rally, conference or

139. *The Black Panther*, 19 December 1970.

140. Churchill and VanderWall, *COINTELPRO Papers*, 229.

141. Chard, *Nixon's War*, 21.

142. *The Black Panther*, 9 May 1970.

143. Manifesto, November 1970 in Eve Pell, ed., *Maximum Security: Letters from California Prisons*, New York: Dutton, 1972, 191-201, 194, 199.

144. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 12 February 1970.

145. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 23 April 1970.

146. Article, 5 July 1968, Uarch 36, Box 1, Office of Public Information, Isla Vista/Student Unrest Subject Files, UCSB (abbrev. Student Unrest Subject Files).

workshop held in I.V. or Santa Barbara during 1971 that we didn't attend."¹⁴⁷ It is likely that even before 1971, agents were present when prominent antiwar activist Dr. Benjamin Spock arrived in town in the fall of 1968.¹⁴⁸

As with UC-Irvine, the unrest there attracted the negative attention of Gov. Reagan, who demagogically manipulated the situation, repeatedly expressing anger over what were termed "disorders" and "disruptions." The local press said the "governor was wrong in charging the chancellor [Vernon Cheadle] capitulated to the [BSU]" since he "refused" their demand for firing the athletic director and a coach.¹⁴⁹ Still, a bomb was found on campus.¹⁵⁰ There was a contagion at play: Even at the placid Claremont Colleges, due east of L.A., a bomb was found.¹⁵¹ (Seale had drawn a crowd of 800 at Pomona College, part of the complex.)¹⁵² The nearby high school in Pomona too was affected.¹⁵³

Pressures continued to build in 1970 as what were described as "roving bands" made it difficult for Isla Vista students to reach the adjacent campus, as "destruction" and "disorder" continued to reign. This turmoil, said Chancellor Cheadle, was "tragic."¹⁵⁴ But in a yeasty statement that represented a typical overestimate, customary of the era, the *Los Angeles Free Press* found this chilled beachside ghetto "a test tube for revolution" embodying the "forerunning...of guerrilla warfare."¹⁵⁵ Of course, misestimates often led to tactics and strategy incongruent with the actual balance of forces. (The analyst may have been misled by comments emerging from I.V. students: "I believe in armed self-defense," said one.¹⁵⁶)

There was a confluence of events that led to this impasse. Illicit drugs were a co-factor that proved appealing to many among the 10,000 students jammed into this postage-stamp sized ghetto, as well as the sacking of a popular anthropologist, William Allen. In February 1970 attorney William Kunstler of New York City, an equivalent of Garry in his colorful and often masterful defenses in courtrooms of Black dissidents, arrived and spoke to a crowd of 4000. That night a bank branch

1147. Cril Payne, *Deep Cover*, 20, 31. For more on FBI agents at this campus, see Ward Churchill and Jim VanderWall, *Agents of Repression: The FBI's Secret War Against the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement*, Baltimore: Black Classic, 2022, 59.

1148. Newsletter, "Santa Barbara Resistance," Sept.-Oct. 1968, Box 3, Los Angeles Resistance Collection, LAPL.

1149. *Santa Barbara News-Press*, 22 October 1968.

1150. *Los Angeles Times*, 12 April 1969.

1151. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 8 January 1971.

1152. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 12 December 1968. Cf. Brian Bradshaw, "Communist Infiltration of Western Culture," 14 December 1970, Los Angeles: Noontide Press, FC 06 0192 04, CSU-Fullerton. At the same site see also Paul C.R. Peterson, "The Communist Hell...fuzzy thinking college beatniks, professors and students alike," unclear date, Freedom Center Ephemera.

1153. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 22 February 1968.

1154. Memo from Chancellor Cheadle, 9 June 1970, Uarch 39, Box 1, Student Unrest Subject Files.

1155. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 24 April 1970.

1156. Interview, ca. 1970, Ron Wilkins Papers.

was torched, and the windows of a realty company were shattered. The arrival of Gov. Reagan did little to stem the tide of tumult. This was followed by a shooting, but then a steady downpour dampened spirits.¹⁵⁷ Subsequently, it was found that during the turbulence in which the governor sought to shut down the campus, 677 were arrested and at least one individual was killed,¹⁵⁸ apparently inadvertently, by a cop in the midst of hundreds of students being beaten and arrested.¹⁵⁹ The challenged professor, William Allen, served two months in the county jail for his prominence during anti-Reagan demonstrations.¹⁶⁰

Spirits were reawakened weeks later, culminating in five days and nights of revolt—and shooting.¹⁶¹ The centerpiece was the attempted burning down altogether of the Bank of America branch in Isla Vista, just after Nancy Rubin, spouse of Yippie leader Jerry Rubin, addressed the crowd.¹⁶² Isla Vista became an armed camp: 500 law enforcement officers dispatched as helicopters circled menacingly overhead,¹⁶³ soon to be an ordinary sight in South L.A. “L.A. police helicopter blasted by gunfire” in “South Central” was becoming a familiar headline.¹⁶⁴

This was serious. Richard Duprey of UCSB recalled that “grass fires were set in the field behind the bank,” as a “larger group of people...wanted to destroy the bank.”¹⁶⁵

Bettina Aptheker reported that the BSU formed in 1967, when there were a mere 60 Blacks on this state-supported campus, but by 1970 there were 235. The spark that led to this conflagration was abuse of Black athletes, one reason for their growing numbers being the mania to succeed in sport. But administrators did not reckon on buildings being occupied nor the torching of the Bank of America.¹⁶⁶

Louis Lundborg, chairman of the Board of the Bank of America, mourned the fact that this branch in I.V. was “totally destroyed.” This bitter reality apparently left him a bit addled, aligning his thinking with that which would contribute to the battering of the BPP. There was a “kind of command staff of Communist radicals financed out of Russia and China,” he maintained. Yes, he concluded angrily, “that may be so,” while adding distressingly, “many people would say ‘maybe we should let some blood flow.’”¹⁶⁷ Apparently inspired, the bank branch at UC-

157. Report from Cheadle, 3 April 1970, Uarch 36, Box 1, Student Unrest Subject Files.

158. *Christian Science Monitor*, 1 March 1970, Uarch 36, Box 6, Student Unrest Subject Files.

159. Payne, *Deep Cover*, 20.

160. *Santa Barbara News-Press*, 18 June 1971.

161. Clipping, 22 April 1970, Uarch 36, Box 1, Student Unrest Subject Files.

162. *Santa Barbara News-Press*, 17 April 1970.

163. *Los Angeles Times*, 19 April 1970.

164. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 10 December 1970.

165. Statement by Richard Duprey, June 1970, Uarch 36, Box 1, Student Unrest Subject Files.

166. *People's World*, 7 March 1970. See also *The Black Panther*, 26 May 1975.

167. Speech by Louis Lundborg, 17 June 1970, Uarch 36, Box 1, Student Unrest Subject Files.

Irvine was subjected to suspected arson.¹⁶⁸ For two years this banking behemoth averaged a bombing per month among its California branches.¹⁶⁹

The “bankster” should not have taken matters so personally. For back then bombings from all parts of the political spectrum were common in the Southland: “1969 was something of a landmark year,” said an observer. A single-engine private plane zoomed low over a Nike Missile site and dropped a Molotov cocktail with no evident damage. From April 1970 to the late spring of 1971, there were 23 bombings, though admittedly the Bank of America was the favorite target, hit seven times—though there was only death during this era from bombings.¹⁷⁰

Signaling the gravity of the matter, Lundborg took out a full-page ad in the *Los Angeles Times* in the form of a missive to the governor, denouncing the “wanton arson perpetrated on our Isla Vista branch,” little more than “an insurrection” and “revolutionary gesture.”¹⁷¹

Soon UCSB students were appearing more regularly in the BPP newspaper, including student leader Michael Barton who was present at a 150-strong “Free Political Prisoners” rally in Ventura’s Plaza Park. Naturally, there were those described as “spies” littering the audience. Ominously, said the Panther reporter, “Shell Oil Company loaned their piglets office space across the street so that the clear view could be recorded on film.”¹⁷² Earlier the BSU wanted Hilliard to speak at their beachside campus.¹⁷³ Illustrating the symbiotic relationships between the increase in Black students and the fortunes of the BPP, the Center for Black Studies at UCSB offered Newton \$1000 for a two-hour appearance.¹⁷⁴ Milton White of the Center asserted that “many of the brothers and sisters on our campus would very much like to have [Newton] speak here” since it “would do much to heighten the level of social consciousness here”—and yes, the ample fee would be “payable immediately.”¹⁷⁵

Such bloodthirstiness was not easy to ignore. The BPP continued to tighten ties with disgruntled soldiers in the “American Servicemen’s Union”¹⁷⁶ and those assembled in Camp Pendleton.¹⁷⁷ On the front page of the party paper in April

168. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 30 October 1970. See also Bruce Mitchell, V.P.-Bank of America to H. Bradford Atwood, UCI, 6 November 1970, Box 23, Series 3, Central Records Collection-UC-Irvine: “Recent burning of our Irvine campus branch.”

169. Harris, *Palo Alto*, 348.

170. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 28 May 1971.

171. *Los Angeles Times*, 1 March 1970, Box 7, Meserve and Scronce Collection.

172. *The Black Panther*, 7 November 1970.

173. FBI Report, 13 January 1970, Reel 18, Black Panther Documents.

174. Agreement Between Newton and CBS-UCSB, 17 December 1970, Reel 52, Black Panther Documents.

175. Milton White to Connie Matthews, 10 December 1970, Reel 52, Black Panther Documents.

176. *The Black Panther*, 10 January 1970.

177. *The Black Panther*, 27 December 1969.

1970 was a picture of Randy Williams, three years a member of the 101st Airborne, who switched sides and was now a "revolutionary."¹⁷⁸

Finally, the authorities launched a barrage of fusillades at these dissident military men. "Wars on coffeehouses" were waged, including the "Green Machine Coffeehouse Project" near Oceanside within hailing distance of Camp Pendleton. In the crosshairs were those leading the "Movement for a Democratic Military," perceived as a mortal threat in wartime. Vigilantes began to take shots at the place, while the office of MDM in San Diego was virtually under siege, broken into at least four times. Perhaps hedging as their source of weapons was being squeezed, the Panthers gave instructions on making a "people's hand grenade."¹⁷⁹

By May 1970 the inevitable occurred: the MDM in Oceanside was attacked. Midnight raiders sent a concentrated burst of weapon fire into their office as comrades dodged and hit the floor. MDM had been formed the previous November by Camp Pendleton Marines and San Diego sailors. It had spread to other bases throughout the state. Through its periodical, *Attitude Check*, MDM reached 8000 Marines nationally, perhaps globally. Soon every MDM principal was being court-martialed for trivialities like being three minutes tardy adjudged to be Absent Without Leave. Police and vigilante harassment and surveillance

178. *The Black Panther*, 25 April 1970.

179. *The Black Panther*, 25 April 1970. Given the presence of military bases, the border and campus ferment, a deeper analysis of San Diego during this era is warranted. See also Memo from Doris Walker, December 1971, Box 46, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard: Apparently even as a graduate student, Davis was under surveillance by the authorities while at UCSD. See, e.g., Ben Waddell, Oral History, 10 December 2018, San Diego History Center (abbrev. Ben Waddell, Oral History): "Kenny Denmon, he started the...Panthers here in San Diego.... he had the gift of gab as far as talking because he and one other guy were in prison, they talked their way out of prison on to the campus of San Diego State [University]." As for Waddell, he was born in 1959 and joined the BPP at the age of 15 or so; he once toiled as a truck driver. Another Panther, Wilbert Hauser, was born in 1951 and on the paternal side of the family there were numerous preachers and contractors. His mother worked for progressive attorney John Porter, who had defended Communists during the Red Scare. The BPP encouraged him to join the military in order to learn about weaponry, "guerrilla warfare...things like that"; he was stationed in West Germany. At one point there were 100 Panthers in San Diego with a headquarters at 30th and Imperial, with their base in the southeast part of town. See Wilbert Hauser, Oral History, 1 August 2018, San Diego History Center (abbrev. Wilbert Hauser, Oral History). See also Mychal Matsemela-Odom, "From Southern California to Southern Africa: Translocal Black Internationalism in Los Angeles and San Diego from Civil Rights to Antiapartheid, 1960 to 1994," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California-San Diego, 2017, 52, 287, 286: "Lack of large scale manufacturing industry" in this metropolis "significantly limited the growth of unionism and the cross-racial solidarity unionism has often brought." Thus, by the 1970s, San Diego "became arguably the most active hotbed to white right activism outside of the South." Contrastingly, during this same era, "hundreds of Black sailors formed a radical organization, the Black Faction;" there was also the "Mau Mau," which was "organized in self-defense of Black servicemen." Cf. Thomas Horne, Oral History, 18 August 2018, San Diego History Center (abbrev. Thomas Horne, Oral History): This Panther toiled at a steel plant on 29th Street and recruited for the BPP there: "I was a Muslim. From the age of 18 to when I was 36 years old...and I started teaching Islam when I was at Soledad [prison] at age 18. At Folsom he encountered mass murderer Charles Manson.

persisted.¹⁸⁰ Yet from Oceanside and the naval base in San Diego and Camp Pendleton, like a prairie fire, the protests and organizing spread to bases throughout the state.¹⁸¹

Weeks later the other shoe dropped. There was the "exposure of a pig," the "undercover" agent John Paul Murray, Jr., who was "posing as Jay King, a civilian organizer for the San Diego Movement for a Democratic Military." He had only done his foul deed of "infiltrating" for six months, limiting the damage, which was pernicious, nonetheless. His tradecraft was incompetent: He was uncovered by an alert hospital orderly when he registered his wife under his real name and stated his occupation as Special Agent assigned to the San Diego Police Department.¹⁸²

The attacks continued. By September 1970 a dozen MDM Marines were attacked at Camp Pendleton for simply wearing wristbands symbolizing Black unity. This ornament was forcibly sliced from their wrists. Responsively, MDM reorganized into distinct wings: one was depicted as a "Black Unity Party" while "the white caucus is yet to be named"—though each had its own newspaper—and likewise, "four white Marines" were detained after "flashing peace signs." "Both groups still operate out of the same headquarters and still carry on many activities."¹⁸³

What may have triggered the authorities was Cleaver's Summer 1970 journey to Pyongyang, accompanied by MDM cadre and others from the Peace & Freedom Party.¹⁸⁴ Journalist Robert Scheer, a kind of "hype man" for Cleaver, also engaged in puffery, asserting that "the State Department can't get you into China"—just before Henry Kissinger's pathbreaking journey there. "You have to go to Algeria and Comrade Eldridge Cleaver will decide whether you go to Chir or not" since he was "functioning as a world diplomat." He was accurate however, in stating that "in these countries" there was a "great appreciation of the role of the Panthers."¹⁸⁵ The Panther organ began to reprint articles from the *Pyongyang Times* saying as much.¹⁸⁶

Apparently, Scheer did not notice what was detected by Elaine Brown when she demanded "Free Kathleen Cleaver," a waggish reference to this Panther leader

180. *The Black Panther*, 19 May 1970.

181. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 8 May 1970. See also Teletype to J. Edgar Hoover from L.A., 11 December 1969, Reel 17, Black Panther Documents: Oceanside rally including Angela Davis re: Captain Howard Levy, who refused to train Green Berets, and Lieutenant Susan Schnall, naval nurse who distributed antiwar leaflets at naval base.

182. *The Black Panther*, 13 June 1970. See also *Los Angeles Free Press*, 13-19 February 1970: San Diego cops "attack anti-war GIs...among the witnesses and victims were Barbara Dane...and Irwin Silber."

183. *The Black Panther*, 5 September 1970.

184. *The Black Panther*, 8 August 1970. See, e.g., *Los Angeles Free Press*, 16 October 1970: Picture of Cleaver, Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia and journalist Robert Scheer.

185. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 23 October 1970.

186. *The Black Panther*, 30 January 1971.

as a kind of prisoner—of her spouse. He barred her from returning home to speak on behalf of Seale, as Brown and Ms. Cleaver “had whispered conversations” in North Korea “regarding the dilemma”: The “virtual prisoner” caged by a “chauvinist,” in fact the “Champion of Male Chauvinism,” was “literally in tears.” After her son Maceo was born, she had been living in a small hotel while the father was “in another room of the hotel with another woman” and “he belligerently told her to go away—which she did,” but still dissatisfied, he “stormed into the room and knocked her around severely.” The man she loved was “Rahim” or Clinton Smith, but he was “killed” by the maddened Cleaver, an ignominious end for a comrade who escaped from Chino prison in California, hijacked a plane to Cuba, then fled to Algeria, where Cleaver “murdered” him. Then while in Pyongyang after her baby was born, “he slapped her there in the hospital bed, told her he was leaving her,” and worse, was “leaving her in Korea indefinitely.” But now “she is locked up there in Algiers with him” and there “fear[ed] of her very life.” The tactless Brown blasted the Algerian leadership as “chauvinist and opportunist” since they gave Cleaver a “plot of ground in which he buried [the deceased].” “I am truly afraid for [her] life,” said Brown.¹⁸⁷ Reportedly, it was Ms. Cleaver—not her better known spouse—who devised the signature phrase of an era, “If you’re not part of the solution, you are part of the problem.”¹⁸⁸ Perhaps her dialectical evaluation of her spouse? Brown was suggesting that the distaff Cleaver had a foot in two camps, especially after the presumed victim dismissed Brown’s report as “absurd” and “ridiculous.”¹⁸⁹

Cleaver was also busy on Voice of Vietnam radio from Hanoi, as he spent months in Asia during the summer of 1970. Helpfully, to disgruntled soldiers and sailors, he provided Charles Garry’s San Francisco address. “You should desert,” he insisted, “you should start blowing them away. Throw those hand grenades at them. And put that dynamite up under their houses, up under their jeeps...sabotage and offing these racist pigs” should be the priority. It was not unusual for soldiers in Vietnam to become “cold blooded” cops, so why not halt this deadly process at the root? Even then in L.A., he offered astringently, “they’re treating us the same way they want to treat the Viet Cong”—a provocative remark designed to stir, published in the party paper.¹⁹⁰

Heeding his call was Billy Dean Smith, a Black soldier who reportedly “didn’t like what he saw” in Vietnam and though “he didn’t say so..., thought the war was racist.” Ultimately, he was accused of “fragging”—or murdering officers. He assembled a Defense Committee at 6430 Sunset Boulevard, where the skilled litigator Luke McKissack defended him successfully.¹⁹¹ Born in Bakersfield in

187. *The Black Panther*, 6 March 1971.

188. Gifford, *Revolution or Death*, 155.

189. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 19 March 1971.

190. *The Black Panther*, 26 September 1970.

191. Billy Dean Smith Defense Committee, ca. 1972, Carton 20, NAACP Papers-UCB.

1948, he was in Watts by 1957 and attended Jordan High School; he was arrested in August 1965 and found not guilty, then drafted in 1969 and sent to Vietnam by October 1970. He was a "Political Prisoner of the U.S. Military," said the Panthers.¹⁹²

Taking to the airwaves to report on this pathbreaking Asian journey designed in part to inspire those like Smith, was the future party Chair, Elaine Brown. On the Pacifica Radio outlet in Berkeley in September 1970 she regaled the audience with stories—reprinted in the party press—on their conferring with Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia and the legendary General Vo Nguyen Giap and Premier Pham Van Dong of Vietnam. Yes, while in China Cleaver "and myself did a broadcast to the Black American GIs," adding tantalizingly, "we hope to provide a vehicle in the future for other people to do the same thing, through the International Section" in Algiers. She was laudatory of this city where their legation was sited in a "very beautiful building," of a "typically Algerian type" of "2 stories" and "very beautifully decorated" besides.¹⁹³ It was from there that news was reported that Cleaver was seeking to recruit Black "deserters" from the U.S. military then sited in Europe in order to fight the imperialist giant of North America.¹⁹⁴ Incidentally, this progressive radio network was becoming crucial to the fortunes of the left and the BPP specifically, which the FBI well knew.¹⁹⁵

Cleaver had referred to Blacks in the U.S. as a "Black Trojan Horse" within the belly of the beast of U.S. imperialism but, growingly, it was evident that he saw Black soldiers and sailors playing a similar role within the military.¹⁹⁶

The FBI had noticed this perceived threat to imperial interests in the Southland and responded correspondingly. By mid-1970 J. Edgar Hoover was told that there was "no longer a BPP in existence...in San Diego." Not coincidentally, the "US organization has, for all practical purposes, remained dominant," a long-term trend nationally. Still, there was a "high level of student unrest on the various campuses" which had "completely overshadowed any activities on the part of Black Nationalists at this time":¹⁹⁷ This was the climate that produced Angela Davis.

The Panthers also viewed the seemingly mundane matter of urban planning through a militarized lens. The effort to build a freeway through El Segundo to Hawthorne to Gardena, it was said in 1970, "runs east and west through the heart

192. *The Black Panther*, 25 September 1971. By the late 1960s about 15 free draft counseling offices existed in the Southland, including a Black anti-draft union with John Harris and another at 1010 Sixth Ave., Los Angeles: Statement, ca. 1969, Box 5, Los Angeles Resistance Collection, LAPL.

193. *The Black Panther*, 3 October 1970.

194. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 12 November 1970.

195. FBI Report, 7 November 1969, Reel 18, Black Panther Documents: Elaine Brown tells Hewitt that the outlet in L.A. will provide airtime. I have been associated with Pacifica Radio for decades and, as I write, host a weekly program on the L.A. affiliate.

196. *The Black Panther*, 20 September 1969, in Heath, *Black Panther Leaders*, 71.

197. Special Agent, San Diego to J. Edgar Hoover, 1 June 1970, Box 21, Roslyn Payne Collection.

of the Black colony...intend[s] to have us covered on all sides [so] that were any disturbance to break out it could be squashed immediately."¹⁹⁸

Politically, the party tightened their ties with other students, especially those at Jefferson High School. Their BSU came about as a result of a mass boycott in 1968 because of both dress and hair restrictions (au naturel verboten) and, as the BPP put it, "no control over the pigs coming on campus." So in 1969 they went on to organize a political party that aligned with the BPP.¹⁹⁹ Yet blood did flow at Dorsey High School as the LAPD reportedly "brutalize[d] unarmed students...beating them with billy clubs."²⁰⁰ This was in the wake of a BSU protest.²⁰¹ These were "Storm Troopers," said one affected, as "more girls than boys" were injured, some while walking home; this was part of Mayor Yorty's campaign to "beat the Negro to death," virtually guaranteeing an all-out Black turnout for 1973, sending Tom Bradley to City Hall.²⁰²

By June 1970 (as I was arriving to reside in San Francisco) the Black Students Alliance in L.A. was outraged when "Melvin X...a non-student...revolutionary" was "assassinated."²⁰³ Then an unarmed Black man named Jerry Lee Amie was killed by the police after being shot 25 times in Los Angeles²⁰⁴—after receiving three Purple Hearts in Vietnam.²⁰⁵ Franklin Alexander and his "People's Tribunal Committee" intervened with an investigation.²⁰⁶

Students at San Fernando Valley State College were apoplectic about what befell this Vietnam veteran at his doorstep. There was an increasing use of armed force to impose "Ultimate Justice" without trial, judge or jury, "especially in the Black and Chicano communities," they asserted²⁰⁷—the latter reference yet another bridge built to this community, which included praise for the "Chicano Moratorium."²⁰⁸ Manuel Moreno was hailed as the "Chicano brother" who chose to "off [a] pig."²⁰⁹

Reverence was accorded to the example of George "Duck" Young, who was "shot down in the streets on the 6th of December by a demented pig...informant" in the prelude to the siege a few days later.²¹⁰ While jailed, this fighter was "jumped" by "pigs" who began "beating and choking him until he was

198. *The Black Panther*, 9 May 1970.

199. *The Black Panther*, 31 January 1970.

200. *The Black Panther*, 7 February 1970.

201. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 16-22 January 1970.

202. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 31 January 1970.

203. *The Black Panther*, 13 June 1970.

204. *The Black Panther*, 27 June 1970. Cf. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 3 June 1970: Nine bullets directed at him.

205. *The Black Panther*, 14 December 1970.

206. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 24 July 1970.

207. *The Black Panther*, 11 July 1970.

208. *The Black Panther*, 3 October 1970.

209. *The Black Panther*, 26 December 1970.

210. *The Black Panther*, 18 July 1970.

unconscious" after they "kicked him in the head." A mere 140 pounds and 5'8" tall, after being tried, the jury acquitted him, which contributed to further vengeful retaliation.²¹¹ By October 1970 the point was made that since February 1968, 11 "brothers...sacrificed their lives."²¹²

This was a precursor to the sieging of an office of the National Committee to Combat Fascism at 731 E. 78th Street. It was directed from the notorious 77th precinct of the LAPD as cops stormed inside with carbines in hand. The comrades responded by seeking community support—seen as the ultimate guarantor of their viability—when they held a "Free Bar-b-que" on a Sunday afternoon.²¹³ But then the NCCF center in Riverside was shuttered, after—said the BPP—it was "viciously and savagely attacked by more than 200 pigs" flashing "50 caliber machine guns, riot shotguns, M-1 carbines, M-16 assault rifles" and the old reliable: teargas. The "pigs" were divided into "assault teams, arrest teams, search and destroy teams and hold and occupy teams." The center was trashed, destroyed. Even children were detained and interrogated. "They cursed out a sister." Weapons were brandished simply to hand out traffic tickets nearby. "Black fool Cultural Nationalists" were seen as complicit. Gary Lawton and Oscar Germaine were principal targets.²¹⁴ Johnny Cochran, who also defended ji Jaga, scurried to Riverside for this case too.²¹⁵

Due east in San Bernardino in August 1970 there were three nights of violence as Black youth fired small caliber weapons and hurled Molotov cocktails as unrest spread.²¹⁶ There was an active American Nazi Party branch there: "Symbol of our country [U.S. flag]" and "symbol of our race [Nazi flag]" was their essential propagandistic armor.²¹⁷ "Black violence at Cajon High School" was their concern; "white owned store firebombed in Muscoy," while "South Muscoy has a Black Panther Party Center."²¹⁸

In the 21st century, the term "swatting" was popularized, involving prank calls to cops directing them to unsuspecting homes for purposes of harassment—or worse.²¹⁹ This praxis was honed against the Panthers, as their office at 731 E. 78th was the victim of a phony tip leading to a raid by cops by someone seeking to provoke a confrontation.²²⁰ To the contrary, the authorities could point to the

211. *The Black Panther*, 17 October 1970.

212. *The Black Panther*, 24 October 1970.

213. *The Black Panther*, 27 July 1970.

214. *The Black Panther*, 12 September 1970. Cf. Campaign to free Lawton and Zurebu Gardner, charged in murder of two Riverside cops, 1974, FC SF F3 3 55, CSU-Fullerton.

215. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 9 February 1972.

216. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 14 August 1970.

217. "Attack! Official Publication of the American Nazi Party," November 1970, Number 33, CUAC Bay Area Reports, Box 69, 93 04 12 D4178 P3, CSA.

218. "Axe Handle," 15 December 1970, CUAC Bay Area Reports, Box 69, 93 04 12 D4178 P3, CSA.

219. *Boston Globe*, 16 August 2018.

220. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 30 July 1970.

so-called "Panther Fortress," i.e., mountains of pistols, ammunition and dynamite were found in Compton under the party's aegis²²¹—which comrades denied.

In sum, the authorities were innovative in dragging down the Panthers but not as adroit in solving the pressing problems that were driving masses to their doorstep. By September 1970 the *Sentinel* reported that unemployment in Watts was "at its highest peak...since the early 50s," no small thing among the "250,000 residents" there.²²² The "housing crisis in the...Black community" of L.A. received special attention from the BPP.²²³ Child care was so rare that it became common practice among poor working mothers to leave their children locked in a car all day while they were working—opening the parent to a charge of child abuse or worse.²²⁴ "Thirteen people in a three room house" in L.A. was deemed to be not that unusual.²²⁵ Mail service was spotty, despite a Negro postmaster and numerous Black workers.²²⁶ By 1971 the county had a reported population of 7 million, up 16.4% from 1960, with Blacks accounting for 763,000,²²⁷ many on the bottom rung of the socio-economic ladder. (In Anaheim, by way of comparison, by 1971 there was a population of 166,000 including 170 Blacks, while Santa Ana contained 145,000, including 6700 Blacks.)²²⁸ Thus, on the first day of January 1972 the Panthers argued that the ruling class decided that the way to deal with this festering sore was to ignore it: "Watts—sealed with a wall...107 acre plot of land, bordered on one side by 103rd Street."²²⁹

Roy Wilkins was displeased with trends he noticed, especially stories involving "about 1000 Panthers" in his homeland who were "following a brand of Chinese Communism." He seemed to suggest that what the NAACP did in rescuing about a score of San Fernando Valley State students from the gallows, expending \$30,000 in the process, was yet another reason for the ruling class to send him a check and help blunt this latest Red offensive.²³⁰

It was unclear how Wilkins responded to the election of what was called a "radical student government" at this campus.²³¹ Wilkins became a useful foil for the BPP. Comrade Pete O'Neal likely had him in mind when he said dismissively

221. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 26 November 1970.

222. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 27 August 1970.

223. *The Black Panther*, 23 January 1970.

224. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 19 February 1971.

225. *The Black Panther*, 26 June 1971.

226. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 22 February 1968.

227. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 18 March 1971.

228. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 25 November 1971.

229. *The Black Panther*, 1 January 1972.

230. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 10 December 1970. See Chard, *Nixon's War*, 292, 62: The "peak membership" of the BPP was about 1200, and by January 1969 it had 45 chapters nationally. Cf. Magnarella, *Black Panther in Exile*, 80: Membership was 1500 at its height in 30 cities.

231. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 5 June 1970.

that he could “vividly recall how many middle and upper class Blacks referred to [Dr. King] as a troublemaker.”²³²

Wilkins's group remained torn by internal dissension. Typically, a major conflict raged over money. The Southland long had been a treasure trove for too many—recall Walter White consorting with Hollywood stars, for example. By 1970 the Beverly Hills-Hollywood branch was continuing this grand tradition except in the turbulence delivered by rapid change as expressed by the ascendancy of the Panthers, new ructions were introduced. Junius Griffin, a NAACP leader, had been employed by Motown, the fabulously influential purveyor of popular music, initially rooted in Detroit but in the process of implanting itself in L.A. And just as Sammy Davis, Jr. once had been a fecund source for funds, Griffin was able to replicate this trend by helping to inspire the “Image Award,” honoring tuxedoed personalities and other stars in evening dress, bringing them together in a posh ballroom creating favorable conditions for ample donations. Under his aegis the “greatest [event] ever held” under the Association umbrella took place—but then he was diagnosed with cancer and then he and long-time leader Maggie Hathaway began to clash. A wounded Griffin then pondered defecting to a new group organized by the Reverend Jesse Jackson of Chicago. Griffin “formerly served as Public Relations Officer for SCLC [Dr. King’s Southern Christian Leadership Conference] and is a close personal friend of...Jesse.” But, continued Gloster Current, Griffin “is vicious and deals in character and personal slander as a weapon,” a trait for which Current was not casually known in NAACP circles. Hathaway, for example, had a “record of her own of divisiveness.” With his usual bluntness, perhaps crudeness, Current wanted to liquidate the branch since he thought the “thousands of dollars” slushing around in Hollywood should go to Manhattan, the national office, and not remain in the Southland (allowing the “Image Awards” and the gift associated with it would be under his control).²³³ For his part, Griffin, in his capacity as president of the Beverly Hill-Hollywood branch, may have inadvertently alienated Current and compromised his ability to raise funds in Black Hollywood by referring bluntly to the “cancer” of “Blaxploitation,” the term ascribed to a flood of cinema that strikingly often highlighted the role of the lumpen.²³⁴ Nonetheless, Seale joined the crusade against this genre, ironically—perhaps contradictorily?—organizing against the cinematic glorification of a pimp: *The Mack*.²³⁵ (Though, as shall be seen, this was part of a scheme to spark the producers’ donation to organizational coffers.)

Finally, Roy Wilkins returned to the old standby, thanking Sammy Davis, Jr. for his “generous offer to contribute” to the coffers.²³⁶

232. Magnarella, *Black Panther in Exile*, 38.

233. Gloster Current to Leonard Carter, 26 October 1972, Box Part IV, C3, NAACP Papers-LC.

234. Statement by Junius Green, 9 August 1972, Carton 8, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

235. Seale remarks, 27 September 1972, Reel 16, Black Panther Documents.

236. Roy Wilkins to Sammy Davis, Jr., 18 January 1971, Carton 83, NAACP Papers-UCB.

Despite sledgehammer blows inflicted against it, the BPP evidently managed to administer a few punches of its own. But in the long run, their prognosis was not positive.

Chapter 14

The Afro-American Liberation Army? 1970-1973

By 1971, the Panthers in the Southland were in trouble. The ferment delivered by the December 1969 siege of their headquarters continued to roil. It was evident that the authorities—per J. Edgar Hoover—saw them as a threat to the established order and thought that squashing them by any means necessary was appropriate, including shootouts and draining courtroom trials. Cleaver's sympathetic biographer argues that the party began to fall apart in January 1971.¹ Pete O'Neal recalled that the number of comrades in Algiers declined from 30 in 1971 to seven by the summer of 1972: O'Neal and his spouse were ensconced in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, by September 1972.² Chief editor of the *New York Times*, A.M. Rosenthal, could barely contain his elation in mid-1972 when he retorted that "not so long ago they [the BPP] were in the paper almost every day. Now, as far as the whites are concerned, they seem to have disappeared."³

As for the Panther paper, once a major source of funding, by 1972 the lament came from East Palo Alto, a site of BPP strength pre-gentrification: "Paper sales were again low" in that "circulated" were "698 papers"; hence, "cut our paper order to 1000."⁴

Rosenthal's bravado notwithstanding, as early as 1972 the lawyer who had defended Angela Davis, Howard Moore, was maneuvering to return Cleaver to the U.S. while evading incarceration.⁵

The courtroom travails of leaders Newton and Seale, along with the campaign to free Angela Davis, were part of this overall strategy to keep dissidents so tied

1. Gifford, *Revolution or Death*, 214. See also Wanted poster for Cleaver, 18 December 1968, INS #5, 9E 3 3-17-4 1.83-95, RG 233, CP Files, Part IV, Box 949, NARA-DC: Listed as having brown eyes; 6'2", about 195 pounds, "armed and extremely dangerous...numerous pock marks on back ...sometimes wears small gold earring in pierced left lobe."

2. Magnarella, *Black Panther in Exile*, 118, 129. See also 61: The BPP enters a "white" church in a Black neighborhood and after being dissatisfied with how their demands were met, a "physical battle on the altar there" ensued, a "physical knock-down drag-out battle."

3. Memo from A.M. Rosenthal, 27 June 1972, Box 60, Times Records.

4. Steve Long to Central HQ, 2 December 1972, Reel 2, Black Panther Documents.

5. Howard Moore to Kathleen Cleaver, 15 December 1972, Carton 5, Cleaver Papers-UCB. See also John A. Oliver, *Eldridge Cleaver Reborn*, Plainfield: Logos, 1977.

up in saving themselves from the calaboose, that organizing the masses took a backseat. To an extent, this backfired, as the Davis campaign demonstrated, which attracted legions to the movement. Still, keeping the most advanced forces entangled in courtroom drama also brought the side effect of frazzling nerves and resultant backbiting, not ideal conditions for organizing.

At the same time, the BPP was under severe strain and pressure and reacted badly. As the sensational live confrontation on television between Cleaver in Algiers and Newton in the Bay Area was beginning to unfold,⁶ debilitating purges ensued. The Southland notably was devastated.⁷

Cleaver expelled Newton and Hilliard,⁸ a move of questionable consequence, while the latter expelled ji Jaga and the Panther 21 on trial in Manhattan. Cleaver contended that there was now a "left wing and a right wing" in the BPP and decidedly,⁹ he was part of the former faction. Cleaver rose to the defense of ji Jaga, perceived to privilege the armed struggle as he did: He was "one of the greatest and most dedicated members that our party's ever had," said the Algiers exile.¹⁰ The "Newton-Seale leadership," said Dorothy Healey, "did something that was unforgivable that was to abandon him [ji Jaga] really because he'd become a supporter of Cleaver."¹¹

6. *The Black Panther*, 19 November 1977: Newton said later that he arranged for Cleaver to appear on the show and then "the world turned upside down.... I could not believe what he was doing. He launched into party business...Central Committee business." Afterwards Newton called him in Algiers and was taped by Cleaver who "released [the tapes] to NBC...he was committing reactionary suicide and trying to take me down with him."

7. *The Black Panther*, 3 October 1970: "Purged from the ranks...Gilbert Parker and Tony Quisenberry...stealing from the masses...Paul Redd and Jackie Johnson are no longer members...Isaiah Houston, Wayne Pharr and James Spencer are no longer members...their practice has been erratic."

8. *Daily Californian*, 5 March 1971, Carton 5, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

9. Statement of International Section, 28 February 1971, Carton 5, Cleaver Papers-UCB. Cf. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 5 February 1971: Cleaver told the reporter, "I know that someone has already been assigned, you see, to kill me...it is making me more serious by the day." But then he continued in a kind of conciliation, "They want Bobby Seale dead. They want Huey Newton dead."

10. *Berkeley Barb*, 12-18 March 1971, Reel 19, Black Panther Documents.

11. Dorothy Healey, Oral History. See *The Black Panther*, 23 January 1970: "On the purge of Geronimo Pratt...this jackanape" was fixated on "money..." Yes, he was "armed," but this meant threats against Hilliard, then Newton. He was captivated by "alcohol and narcotics...he maintained a personally pleasure seeking life...[and] violated many young Black sisters he met while moving from town to town." In response ji Jaga and the "Revolutionary Peoples Communication Network" on behalf of the "Afro-American Liberation Army" attacked Newton and the "rest of the 'Peralta Street Gang.'" Like others, he cited Uruguay and the Tupamaros as a role model; also cited favorably were Angola, Mozambique, Vietnam and Northern Ireland. He continued: "Lumpen has a higher understanding" though he felt they had an undue emphasis on "pimping." Thus, "the vanguard of our struggle...bulk of the liberation struggle in this country identifies with Eldridge.... Papa is 'King Lumpen.'" He attacked Elaine Brown, Newton, Hilliard. "It was through me that Huey met George [Jackson].... when it came to the .45, Emory and David didn't know it had to be cocked." "Humanity...Freedom....Peace," n.d., ca. 1972, BLA Vertical File. At the same site and collection see also "Brief Comments..." n.d.: "Only *one* organization inside the U.S. [is] known as the Black

The party paper wondered if Cleaver was "attempting to divide the Black Panther Party"—or, perhaps, a wider movement, since he denounced not only Hilliard and Newton but Angela Davis and Cuba too.¹² Earlier, Michael "Cetewayo [Cetshwayo]" Tabor and his New York Panther comrade Dhoruba bin Wahad, also known as Richard Moore, were declared to be "enemies of the people" by what, for purposes of clarity, I will term the "Newton faction." Tabor wound up in Algiers and bin Wahad tried to get there. Then expelled were Rosemary Mealy and Marcia Robertson, who had been working with the Connecticut chapter.¹³

At one point, a flight from San Francisco to Los Angeles cost less than \$12 one way and was by some measures, the busiest air route globally. Once it forged the party, but increasingly, as splits emerged,¹⁴ it became a route of dissension and division.

It is possible that the imprisonment of Karenga beginning in mid-1971 paradoxically may have fed splits internally among the BPP since this external "threat" which drove them all together dissipated.¹⁵ As Karenga writhed in prison, factions within the party tore into each other. He was "suffering from hallucinations, delusions and disorganization," said an observer, and was "a present danger to himself and others"; the man was "talking to a blanket which he believed was a person." The observer found it not happenstance that the fathers of both Karenga and Newton happened to be Christian preachers.¹⁶

Another alleged coincidence, said Dorothy Healey, was that Karenga's forces "had the biggest arsenal of any group and they were left unchallenged...the police never tried to do anything about it...no question he was getting police protection," for "people who were in US who were friends of mine" acknowledged as much.¹⁷

Liberation Army.... it is a democratic centralist organization" that identifies with FRELIMO of Mozambique, the National Liberation Front in Vietnam, and the Tupamaros of Uruguay: do not confuse, they said, the Republic of New Afrika and their "Provisional Government" with the BLA.

12. *The Black Panther*, 6 March 1971. See also Newton on Cleaver, 10 April 1971, Reel 12, Black Panther Documents.

13. *The Black Panther*, 13 February 1971.

14. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 25 July 1968.

15. Karenga to Adult Authority, n.d., Mervyn Dymally Papers: "I have been in confinement since 21 June 1971...county jail...Chino and Vacaville."

16. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 29 July 1971.

17. Dorothy Healey, Oral History. She also related a meeting a few years earlier with Karenga and Carmichael "at the home of Vera and Frank Greenwood.... Sam Yorty's field secretary, a Black guy, was there [Willard Murray?]....he used to go to everything of the radical Black movement in order to report back to Yorty...he made no bones about it," and a "Maoist" asked her for guns, leading to a confrontation. See *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 13 January 1968; Photo of Carmichael with "friend Willard Murray of Mayor Samuel Yorty's office." Panthers denied use of auditorium, and Murray is "intervening on behalf of Mr. Carmichael." Cf. *People's World*, 25 January 1969: BPP leaders tie Karenga to "Pig Power Structure...[Mayor] Yorty." Angela Davis referred to "Leroy [sic] Jones and Ron Karenga [sic]" as "nothing but pig agents": Letter from Davis, read by prosecution, 2 June 1970, in trial, 25 April 1972, Reel 11, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS. See also Earnest Preacely, Oral History, 8 February 2006, UCLA: Karenga's group was a "military organization...trained

If the imprisonment of Karenga created conditions for Panther factions to battle each other, it also may have given a boost to a Black Nationalist competitor. For by 1972 the Nation of Islam was being touted as the "richest Black organization of all times in assets." Their newspaper "claims to have the highest circulation of any Black newspaper in excess of 500,000 weekly," and there were also "50 mosques, some 25,000 acres of farmland," a "chain of...restaurants, meal processing plants and delivery trucks," "retail stores," "real estate," and a "Super Constellation plane."¹⁸ As the dust cleared and the time arrived to tally victors and victims of an era, the BPP was interred by about 1980, the CP split grievously by 1992 in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the NAACP plodded along, Karenga's forces survived, as did the Nation of Islam. There were many reasons for this but one was that the first two presented a more bracing challenge to capitalism itself and sought to connect with the like-minded globally, which brought the hammer down on their collective heads.

Extraordinarily, this trend, involving brutal internal conflict among the Panthers, was a plot twist that unfolded almost as if it had been scripted by the FBI—and, in a sense, it was. They had pledged to drive a "wedge" between Newton and Cleaver, along with stoking tension between Karenga and the Panthers, at the same time undermining Jane Fonda.¹⁹

by...LAPD...they had the best training...best weapons...Panthers didn't have a chance. Not a chance...can substantiate it." Cf. Patrick Germany, Oral History, 15 July 2018, San Diego History Center (abbrev. Patrick Germany, Oral History): This former Panther referred to Karenga's detachment as an "undercover FBI faction." See also Thomas Home, Oral History: "John Huggins and Bunchie [sic] Carter...had been assassinated by the US organization.... the police made us rivals by making a deal with the US organization to help them eliminate us," meaning the BPP to which Home belonged. "And they started buying them brand new Volkswagen Beetle Bug type things. You know, those round ones?"

18. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 20 April 1972. See also Joe Walker, New York editor of *Muhammad Speaks*, to Sheriff of Marin County, 20 January 1971, Reel 1, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS: In seeking to interview Professor Davis, he mentioned that his periodical was the "largest Black circulated newspaper" in the U.S. The reach and influence of the Nation—perforce—was not ignored by the Black Left. In fact, if you consult their back issues, you will find articles written by this writer, especially after returning from Salvador Allende's Chile in 1973, after departing Berkeley. See also article ca. 1971 by Huey Newton, "War without Terms: The Death of George Jackson," Reel 60, Black Panther Documents: BPP paper "weekly circulation of 150,000." See also *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 1 February 1973: "Two wars" amidst "violent power struggle" in the Nation of Islam. Also noted was the October 1971 attempt to murder Raymond Sharrieff of the Nation, billed as the son-in-law of then leader, Elijah Muhammad. In the 21 June 1973 edition mention is made of the Nation purchasing the Elks Hall at 40th and Central, a noteworthy societal transition.

19. U.S. Congress, Senate, 94th Congress, 2nd Session, Report 94-755, Supplementary Detailed Staff Reports on Intelligence Activities...Book III, Final Report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence, Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1967. Carton 30, Cleaver Papers-UCB. And though Karenga continued to contend that the "twin dragons of capitalism and racism remain our real enemy," he may have won adherents among the ruling class by simultaneously singling out Donald Freed, the Panthers' main Euro-American supporter, for assailment: Statement, 12 November 1971, Mervyn Dymally Papers. Cf. the review of *Executive Action*, the still riveting Hollywood film about the JFK assassination for which Freed supplied the

Fonda, a scion of Hollywood royalty and a star by any measure, was a strategic target. In March 1970 she had helped to mobilize other stars and personalities "in an action concerning the crimes perpetrated against the Black Panthers," including "seeking to exterminate the leadership of the Black Panther Party.... money should be raised to help them in their present legal battles."²⁰ Dalton Trumbo co-signed her letter, provided a monthly stipend to the party through the "Friends of the Panthers" vehicle, and opened his home to visiting French writer Jean Genet, in town to bring attention to the Panthers.²¹

* * *

"Never before in the history of this country," said one analysis, "has such a domestic war been waged against an organization and its members as it [the authorities] attempted" against the BPP. This included the plan to "develop informants...serving to create distrust among activists and the defection of peripheral members." A mission was clear: Seek the "expulsion" of "Masai" Hewitt, tar him as a "suspected informant...give the false impression that he is a FBI informant." Evidentially, the FBI had 30 field offices containing a squad focused on investigating the party, each containing 25 personnel beavering away on this project alone, and each required to have a minimum of five informants within the party.²² Thus, in retrospect, Charles Garry's 1970 assertion that there were about 70 agents that had infested the party seems like an underestimate.²³

Nevertheless, Cleaver, in particular, provided plenty of rope by which the authorities proceeded to lasso, snare and hang the BPP. CP leader Dorothy Healey felt that there was "no question that Eldridge and Kathleen Cleaver's dominance

story and Trumbo the screenplay. The review was by the former "Hollywood 10" defendant, Lester Cole: *People's World*, 24 November 1973. For more on Freed, born in Chicago in 1932, see Series 2, Box 42, Newton Foundation. See also Freed to Elaine Brown, 1 April 1975, Reel 53, Black Panther Documents: "The film project is finally moving with the promise of some real money for the party."

220. Jane Fonda, et al., to Maitre Leo Matarasso in Paris, 25 March 1970, Box 113, Dalton Trumbo Papers, UCLA (abbrev. Trumbo Papers): Her address then was 10744 Charlton Road in West L.A., and her letter was co-signed by Angela Davis, Mark Rydell, Sydney Pollack, Abby Mann, Dennis Hopper, Michele Phillips, Bert Schneider, Peter Fonda, Shirley and Donald Sutherland—and Trumbo. See also John Thorne to Jane Fonda, 21 December 1970, Box 101, Thorne Papers: "Thank you once again not only for your tremendous work in the Soledad benefits in New York."

221. See Trumbo to "Friends of Panthers," ca. March 1970, Box 113, Trumbo Papers: His address then was 8710 St. Ives Drive in L.A. 90069. Gwen Goodloe of BPP to Trumbo, 29 March 1970, Box 113: She included a quote from Cleaver: "When the slave of imperialism who lives inside the house of imperialism picks up guns against the imperialists to make common cause with the revolutionary peoples of the whole world, we know that the days of the imperialists are numbered."

222. FBI Counter-Intelligence, ca. 1970, Reel 42, Black Panther Documents.

223. Churchill and VanderWall, *Agents of Repression*, 48.

in the party nationally and in the state was a very unfortunate one because he went even further in the use of rhetoric than Huey and Bobby." Yes, she added, "the enormous attacks against them, the shootouts that the police organized, without any question short-circuited the process by which politics would have been debated and a more sensible politics decided upon."²⁴

* * *

On one level, the existence of the BPP, and its potential for disruption and wealth redistribution, spurred some donors to pour their often-immense resources into the coffers of the NAACP. This illustrates how the very existence of the BPP benefited the NAACP and the former's demise was a blow to the latter. But on another level, the existence of the BPP drove activist youth away from this Association. By 1971 it appeared that the fortunes of the group had taken a nosedive, validating the idea that these times were not ideal for the Association. As of November 1970, the L.A. branch was operating with a \$4000 deficit, and the Internal Revenue Service was threatening to close its doors. There were complaints about the lack of draperies in the office and the strange reality, as reported, that "secretaries sat in hot sun most of the day." Yet an official statement in mid-1971 said that "between 5000 and 6000 members have been added since November 2, 1970,"²⁵ suggesting that sticky fingers and speculation continued to plague membership dues and donations to the Association. Elbert Hudson, son of Association bigwig Dr. Hudson, was told that the tenor of the group then was "unscrupulous," demonstrating "insensitivity toward human beings."²⁶ *Gloster Current* from the national office begged to differ, sharply instructing former Executive Secretary William Carlisle: "You discredited yourself," to wit, a "serious mistake was made" in "employing you" given your "very limited knowledge of the NAACP"; thus "your removal [was] justifiable."²⁷ The ample

24. Dorothy Healey, Oral History. She also avers that Cleaver "stopped" the Peace & Freedom Party "from ever being what it potentially could have been as a third party in California politics. All he used it for was really the most ridiculous, almost obscene, mouthing of radical phraseology and vulgar language that simply turned off all the potential sympathizers who did want a radical alternative to the two-party system."

25. Report of the Executive Secretary, 1 June 1971, Box C76, Part VI, NAACP Papers-LC.

26. William Carlisle to Elbert Hudson, 6 June 1971, Box C76, Part VI, NAACP Papers-LC. Interestingly, there was a doppelgänger of Dr. Hudson in San Diego. Dr. Jack Johnson Kimbrough, born in 1908 and named after the pugilist, was a founder of the Urban League chapter. He too was a dentist and added: "My father and his father also, my grandfather, Charlie Kimbrough, he was so black the only way they could tell him from his white brother was the fact that he had a brown eye and a blue eye. My father looked like he was white, no one knew he was black." See Dr. Jack Johnson Kimbrough, Oral History, 11 October 1990, San Diego History Center.

27. *Gloster Current* to William Carlisle, 28 June 1971, Box C76, Part VI, NAACP Papers-LC.

point was that at a moment when Black L.A. desperately needed competent leadership, the NAACP remained wracked by internal squabbling.

Thus, Leonard Carter of the regional West Coast office of the NAACP—formerly headed by Franklin Williams, who went on to serve as U.S. ambassador to the Ghana of Kwame Nkrumah (he was there at the time of the 1966 coup)—was upset by the casting of the Hollywood blockbuster *Patton*. There were no Negroes on screen for this wartime epic, though there were Negroes that could have been cast to be truer to history.²⁸ Dennis Stanfill of the studio in question, 20th Century Fox, knew who he was dealing with, so he sent a check for \$500, which a sated Carter found to be “truly outstanding” and sought more.²⁹ Stanfill poor-mouthed that this major enterprise was enduring “large losses”³⁰—so, accept this chump change.

Predictably, the Association was more aggressive in confronting a production helmed by the leading Black stars Sidney Poitier and Harry Belafonte. *Buck and the Preacher* was shot in Mexico around 1971 and told a revisionist story of the “Old West” that was also antislavery and antiracist. The NAACP met with Joel Glickman, billed as the representative for the stars. There were “complaints that segregation” was “practiced by the producers especially in the technical positions” (though branch members were employed)—but “not enough Blacks were hired,” adding “in the town of Dorego [*sic*] there are not enough dark skinned Mexicans” although producers said they would hire Afro-Mexicanos.³¹

This was even more extraordinary since the NAACP had been complaining about the rising “blaxploitation” trend, and here was a Poitier-Belafonte production that was expanding cinematic discourse—and they were objecting on questionable grounds. Leonard Carter, the regional representative, recalled that the Beverly Hills-Hollywood branch had been chartered in 1962 but then “confusion and turmoil...division and chaos...loud shouting and tantrums” became the norm. Now the “Black Exploitation” genre had led to “bitter controversy,” and this recognition led to the overriding trend: a takeover of the branch by the national office so as to grab the goose laying the golden eggs. “The motion picture and large segments of the television industry are far too important to our people,” he asserted, and to our organization nationally to be intrusted [*sic*] in a local branch.”³²

Meanwhile, back in Algiers, there was a different variety of the trend of not meeting the moment. By October 1971 Kathleen Cleaver was back in the U.S. calling for an “urban guerrilla struggle.” Similarly important was that her spouse termed the entente between the U.S. and China as a setback to his movement. That

28. Leonard Carter to Dennis Stanfill, 22 September 1971, Carton 15, NAACP Papers-UCB.

29. Leonard Moore to Dennis Stanfill, 15 December 1971, Carton 15, NAACP Papers-UCB.

30. Dennis Stanfill to Leonard Carter, 12 October 1971, Carton 15, NAACP Papers-UCB.

31. Undated memo, ca. 1971, Carton 77, NAACP Papers-UCB.

32. Leonard Carter to Gloster Current, 26 October 1972, Carton 77, NAACP Papers-UCB.

it was, and indeed it compromised further his faction's effort to pummel Moscow and Havana, and anyone associated with them, making well-nigh inevitable the eventual result: crawling back to his homeland and begging for forgiveness. That was not his point then, however, as he echoed what his wife had said, that "his future struggle... would follow the example of urban guerrilla movements in Latin America, Quebec and Northern Ireland."³³ Echoing her spouse during her whirlwind visit to the Southland, Kathleen Cleaver restated their view that the "lumpen is still in the central position in the streets, the armed forces and the penitentiaries" and "the most powerful force against the pigs." Apparently oblivious to the snares of sectarianism at a time when many in her faction thought fascism was nigh, she went on to denounce Stokely Carmichael, Elaine Brown, Newton and his "Black Mafia... he's been seen gambling thousands of dollars at Lake Tahoe."³⁴

According to a rapt listener at UCLA, she declared the party to which she had contributed so much to be dead, though in her hour-long riposte she reserved her bitterest words for the FBI and CIA. Again, she unearthed the underground—of questionable helpfulness—by speaking openly of the "Afro-American Liberation Army recently founded by her husband," which "would work closely with other revolutionary groups elsewhere, particularly with Black guerrillas in South Africa and Rhodesia." Although her visit was sponsored by the Black Student Union, an observer found it curious that the "500 present" were "largely white." Even more curious was this reporter's conclusion that "it seemed like [the] deal was to turn in those Blacks she knows to be engaged in subversive activities" so that her spouse could return from Algiers, "[T]his opens the door to many questions" was the understated conclusion.³⁵

33. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 17 October 1971, Reel 19, Black Panther Documents. See *Washington Star*, 7 October 1971: Eldridge Cleaver says the U.S.-China entente was "confusing" and "cause for alarm from the point of view of the Black man"—truer words have rarely been spoken. See also *Hamilton [Ontario] Spectator*, 18 January 1971, RG 233, Box 489, HUAC Records: "Any successful revolution in Quebec, however, will have to co-operate with the Black Panthers in the U.S. and the revolutionary factions in Latin America." See, e.g., Louis Fournier, *FLQ: The Anatomy of an Underground Movement*: Toronto: NC Press, 1984: We desperately need a study in English detailing the manifold ties between Quebec and the Black Liberation Movement, at least stretching back to the 1712 revolt of the enslaved in Manhattan, said to be aided by Quebec connections.

34. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 31 October 1971. In this same edition, journalist Earl Ofari assails her view of the lumpen.

35. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 28 October 1971. Cf. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 4 November 1971: After hailing the Weathermen, she said of her spouse: "He never said he wanted to come back and lead... guerrilla warfare. His home is Los Angeles. He told me he would return very soon through the underground." She rebuked the BPP, deriding their social welfare initiatives as a "fusion between the Urban League and the Black Muslims." See also Mbutu Angola Ouagadougou, *The Black Guerrilla Family, 1966-1971*, Los Angeles: Plebiscite, 2022, 103, 106: The BGF, says the author, was founded in 1966 by "W.L. Nolen and George Jackson at San Quentin," with Jackson cited for the idea that it was necessary to "transform the black criminal mentality into a black revolutionary mentality." The

The *Sentinel* reporter, Emily Gibson, was underwhelmed. She called it “rap-a-lution,” militant action defined as “revolutionary rhetoric without basis in fact.” Nevertheless, Cleaver did bring attention to the besieged Blacks of Cairo, Illinois, then being persecuted by a combination of law enforcement and racist paramilitary forces, who merited the spotlight. Like many, Cleaver derided Pan-Africanism as “madness,” even as she was communing with radical Congolese and residing in Algiers. She was articulate in “stating a case for guerrilla warfare,” a topic perhaps best left unearthed publicly. Gibson, responding like a seasoned comrade, reprimanded her for “failing to recognize the existence of certain objective conditions” that would propel this brand of warfare, including aid from the previously derided in Havana and Moscow. Still, Cleaver’s “heroes” included “Che [Guevara],” though otherwise she was said to present a recipe for “instant suicide.”³⁶

It would have been well if the Panthers had listened more carefully to this journalist who advised that certain conditions must exist in order for armed struggle to be executed to overthrow the ruling class. Such would have included these parasites being unable to rule in the old way and the masses unwilling to live in the old way, with a popular vanguard—not just a self-proclaimed Black vanguard—capable of advancing to the next stage of history. None of these existed then, she said.³⁷ Gibson, the unsung intellectual thinker of this conflicted era, entitled her insightful column, “Revolutionary Reflections”—“using the tool of Dialectical Materialism” was her credo, a signpost of an era.³⁸ It was Gibson who asserted that “racism is [the] tool of [the] real enemy—capitalism.” She termed “cultural nationalism,” the emblem of the then imprisoned Karenga, “reactionary,” reflective of an “incorrect assessment” in that it “embraced male chauvinism...Black Capitalism,” and was, ergo, “hogwash.”³⁹

Similarly, Cleaver’s actions undercut his ambitions because simultaneously he termed his hosts in Algiers part of the “Bourgeois Class ’revisionist[s],” the latter word being code for Moscow, since, among other issues, President Houari Boumedienne objected to the comrades’ promiscuous smoking of marijuana and other violations of their social norms.⁴⁰

His spouse was similarly contemptuous of the Algerian leadership. “If the Algerian government was not so anxious to please the Americans we would be rolling [in] money now” since “the last [airplane] hijacker that came here” arrived with a cool “one million dollars” that was not turned over to the legation. Instead,

BGF “advocated armed struggle,” it is said, and to that end “committed crimes to finance urban guerrilla enterprises...bank robberies, extortion and contract killings.”

36. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 11 November 1971.

37. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 25 November 1971.

38. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 6 January 1972.

39. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 13 January 1972.

40. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 12 August 1972, Reel 19, Black Panther Documents.

"they just blocked the street with their cars, pulled guns on us and told us to get out! What beautiful revolutionary comrades in arms,"⁴¹ was her sarcastic rejoinder.

Then she showed up at the Cannes Film Festival with an armed band of Panthers. According to an observer, she "looked like a fashion model in a chic beige twill suit with knee high suede boots...accompanied by a security guard of women in Afro hairdos and men in cowboy clothing."⁴² (Remarkably, and for various reasons, the press paid inordinate attention to the physical appearance of the Black Left: Recall the renderings of Eldridge Cleaver, for example, during his appearance at Southland campuses. Although admittedly attention to the dress and appearance of women comrades, especially Kathleen Cleaver and Angela Davis, was extraordinary. Thus, the former was portrayed as a "small woman. Thinly built" with "keen features...grayish eyes."⁴³ In an early examination of Davis, the Communist press referred to her as a "mini-skirted 25 year old,"⁴⁴ which led to an apology for this "brazenly male chauvinistic" assessment.⁴⁵ No such apology came from the *Sentinel*, which also referred to the "slender" and "mini-skirted" academic who "wears a natural Afro hairdo."⁴⁶ Nor were regrets expressed for terming her "an undeniable beauty."⁴⁷ Their counterpart, the *Herald-Dispatch*, referred to her "long shapely limbs"⁴⁸—without apology. The *Los Angeles Free Press* referred to her—without definition—as "very feminine."⁴⁹ A witness who sold her a pistol in January 1968 described her as 5'8" tall and a "hundred and fifty pounds" with brown hair and eyes and a "gap between" her teeth that was "very distinctive"—without mention of a mini-skirt.⁵⁰ The judge in Davis's trial "chid[ed]" her attorney during her trial, Howard Moore, "for losing all his attractive female assistants."⁵¹ Davis's sister Fania was described by veteran Communist Joseph North, as a "slim, handsome woman of 23."⁵² Dorothy Healey,

41. Kathleen Cleaver to Myriel, 1 August 1972, Box 1, Cleaver-TAMU.

42. Undated clipping, Reel 19, Black Panther Documents.

43. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 4 November 1971. At times observers looked into her eyes and described them as either blue or green or bluish-green.

44. *People's World*, 27 September 1969.

45. *People's World*, 11 October 1969.

46. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 25 September 1969.

47. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 3 September 1970.

48. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 8 January 1970. They also called her a "pretty mixed up young lady" and she responded diplomatically: "I read your articles—I walk by your office every Saturday and read them posted on the front door."

49. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 26 September-2 October 1969.

50. Testimony of John Edwin Plimpton, assistant manager of Brass Rail Gun Shop, 1136 N. La Brea in Hollywood, 10 November 1970, Grand Jury-Marin County, Reel 1, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

51. Transcript, 29 November 1971, Reel 4, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

52. *People's World*, 14 November 1970.

frequently described as the Red Queen, was once questioned about "wearing expensive jewelry" along with "makeup and the latest type of hairdo."⁵³)

Yet in the midst of the inflamed language and penury, Cleaver quite importantly repeated his call for a plebiscite whereby African-Americans could exercise self-determination about their future in North America, though how that would happen in the face of staunch opposition from Washington, while alienating Moscow, Havana and increasingly Algiers, apparently had not occurred to the comrades.⁵⁴ Still, the "Cleaver Faction," which had close ties to him in New York City, simultaneously trumpeted the companion idea—"Toward a People's Army"—while he continued to raise hopes about the role of Congo-Brazzaville.⁵⁵

This was understandable for by December 1971, Kathleen Cleaver was present at what was described as a "long luncheon at the Congolese U.N. ambassador's swanky residence in Bronxville," north of the Bronx with the "atmosphere" described as "excellent." In fact, said Cleaver's correspondent, "they offered to organize a dinner between the Chinese, themselves and us."⁵⁶ She also cited the Congolese writer Ange Diawara for the proposition that the "lumpen is the vanguard."⁵⁷ Importantly, the party highlighted "the revolutionary government of Congo-Brazzaville and the Congolese Workers Party," giving fulsome attention to their leader, Marien Ngoubai.⁵⁸

For reasons that in retrospect seem misleading, many Panthers, and Communists too, were critical of Pan-Africanism.⁵⁹ Yet the BPP performed a useful service in promoting internationalism, by highlighting socialist projects in Africa. Thus, it was inspiring when Newton appeared in the party press alongside Samora Machel, the founding father of Mozambique independence.⁶⁰ It was also Newton who in early 1971 spoke at length to the journal of Mandela's ANC,

⁵³ Confidential FBI Report, ca. April 1965, Box 3, Dorothy Healey Papers-UCLA. In the same box, see Special Agent-L.A. to J. Edgar Hoover, 29 November 1968: Healey listed as 5'1" and 110 pounds with brown hair and graying blue eyes and a "dark...complexion." See also leaflet, ca. 1960, Box 2, Los Angeles Resistance Collection, LAPL: Picture of three women of European descent on a couch with the inscription: "Girls say yes to boys who say no," i.e., no to conscription.

⁵⁴ *San Francisco Chronicle*, 26 November 1971.

⁵⁵ Cleaver, *Target Zero*, 220, 231.

⁵⁶ "Elaine" to Eldridge Cleaver, 4 December 1971, Carton 5, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

⁵⁷ *Los Angeles Free Press*, 31 October 1971.

⁵⁸ *The Black Panther*, 4 October 1971. See also Huey P. Newton to Marlen Ngoubai, 15 November 1971, Reel 11, Black Panther Documents.

⁵⁹ I suspect that those of the Black Left expending time and energy in anti-apartheid and Southern African solidarity generally—or even residing in Algiers—were overreacting to what they saw as a romanticized and misleading view of Pan-Africanism as embodied by Karenga and Carmichael. Cf. *The Black Panther*, 16 January 1971: See the front-page picture of Congolese patriot Patrice Lumumba alongside local martyrs and Che Guevara. See also Henry Winston, "The Meaning of San Rafael," 1971, Box 1, Angela Davis Collection-Claremont: "Adventurist tactics encouraged by some radicals today...accommodate to imperialism by advocating Pan-Africanism...like many petty bourgeois radicals."

⁶⁰ *The Black Panther*, 23 October 1971.

informing readers that the BPP "grew out of the Black Power movement but the Party transformed the ideology of Black Power into socialist ideology, a Marxist-Leninist ideology" with a "program" of "armed struggle." Newton, who had an uncanny ability to tell an audience what he presumed they wanted to hear, spoke of their "inspiration" being "Fidel and Che, Ho Chi Minh and Mao and Kim Il-Sung," along with analogous struggles in "Mozambique and Angola," as they were "friends with all Marxists." But then he added his twist: "we have become intercommunalists and not internationalists as in the past."⁶¹

Similarly, Chen Chimutengwende, a leader of patriotic forces in Zimbabwe, then serving in London as chief editor of the Nkrumah Institute of Writers, informed "Comrade Cleaver" about Muammar "Ghadafi" of Libya, a "bourgeois but patriotic nationalist" who came to power in 1969; he was "more anti-British than he is anti-American" and was "unpredictable," but "is always anti-imperialist," meaning he was good to have alongside too.⁶²

To its credit, the Algiers legation was crucial to forging global solidarity with the struggle of African-Americans, a real breakthrough the profundity of which is signaled by the point that it has not been duplicated before—or since. (They were aided by the counter-cultural press in L.A. which widely publicized their telex number.⁶³) In April 1971 in Copenhagen, eight Panther support groups—mostly from Europe (Frankfurt, Stockholm, Malmö, Lund, London, Amsterdam, etc.)—convened. There was a diffusion of BPP politics—a "schism" in the ranks—and their ideology too: "Voice of the Lumpen" was featured.⁶⁴ A support group was being formed in Japan too.⁶⁵

This was part of an Asian offensive by the party, which included the authorities in Vietnam informing Newton that they were "deeply moved" by his "intending to send to [the National Liberation Front and other units] an undetermined number of troops."⁶⁶ Cleaver echoed this proposal by seeking to

61. Interview with Huey Newton in *Sechaba*, 16 January 1971, Reel 2, Black Panther Documents. For an exploration of intercommunalism, see, e.g., Newton and Erik H. Erikson, *In Search of Common Ground: Conversations with Huey P. Newton and Erik H. Erikson*, New York: Dell, 1974.

62. Chen Chimutengwende to "Comrade Cleaver," 24 October 1972, Carton 5, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

63. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 27 August 1971.

64. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 2 April 1971.

65. *The Black Panther*, 4 December 1971. See Letter from Matsuko Ishida, Committee to Support the BPP, ca. 1971, Reel 11, Black Panther Documents. Subsequently discredited, Earl Anthony traveled to Japan on behalf of the party and, said Newton: "It was the Japanese students who stated the Party's actual position...that complicate[s] the Black-white situation" with this binary being the preoccupation of Black Nationalists. Newton, *Revolutionary Suicide*, 193.

66. Letter to Huey P. Newton, 31 October 1970, Reel 11, Black Panther Documents. Given Newton's friendliness with Beverly Axelrod, it is likely that he utilized her contacts in Vietnam to make a connection there. See Nguyen Van Luy to Axelrod, 11 October 1965, Box 8, Beverly Axelrod Papers. "Gratitude and appreciation for your activities to end our (U.S.) government's unjust war in Vietnam...just received a note from Madame Bui-Thi-Cam of the Vietnam Women's Union in Hanoi...asking me to convey to you their vast greetings and their wish to hear something from you."

arrange prisoners involved in the revolt at Attica, the upstate New York prison, to be exiled to either Congo (Brazzaville), North Korea, Algeria, China—or Vietnam.⁶⁷ And despite Cleaver being an unpleasant guest in Cuba, the Havana-founded Organization of Solidarity with the People of Asia, Africa, and Latin America continued to provide support to the Black American struggle.⁶⁸ Underscoring the utility of this internationalism—besides the obvious, mobilizing a global audience in favor of Black Liberation—when ji Jaga was being sought by the authorities he recalled, “They were told I was with Eldridge in Algiers, in Moscow, Paris, Nairobi, or I was in South America with Che Guevara,” so they were diverted in fruitless searches, providing him with added breathing space.⁶⁹

There was even a possibility that Kathleen Cleaver’s well-connected father could be mobilized for non-sensitive tasks. Born in Chattanooga in 1911, he had spent time in India, then the Philippines from 1956 to 1958, then on to Liberia. Writing via his employer, the U.S. Agency for International Development, he told his daughter of his own “hope for the wretched,” as he scribbled: “To Kathleen, with the hope for a better understanding of me,” signed by “Daddy.”⁷⁰

At the legation in Algiers there were two large brass plaques, each bearing the likeness of a panther, that greeted the onlooker. In April 1971 there a three-hour discussion ensued between a visiting left-wing U.S. reporter and the comrades. There was unremitting criticism of David Hilliard who, it was said, “consciously set about to destroy the Armed Underground...he even ordered that guns be taken out of some Panther offices!” The consensus there was that “the Black people of America were ready for armed struggle and serious underground activity,” especially since “there’s no hope in the courts...we got [to] break ‘em all out,” referring to the incarcerated. Jonathan Jackson, the younger brother of the imprisoned George Jackson, who led an action north of San Francisco reputedly to free the incarcerated, “ended all that,” speaking of opposition to armed struggle. “[W]hat is necessary now,” it was said, “is a party to advance and expedite the armed struggle.” The “main focus” should be “armed action, stressing sabotage and support for a military underground.” Contrarily, the point was that “We’ll ‘organize’ the working class by bombing the factories,” for “mass work can only supplement the armed struggle.”⁷¹ (Two weeks before the incitement of 7 August 1970 featuring the teenage Jackson, he apparently was

Bui-Thi-Cam to Axelrod, 2 October 1967, Box 8: “Two years have gone since we met in Djakarta...I often think of you.”

67. Cleaver proposal, 12 September 1971, Reel 30, Black Panther Documents.

68. *The Black Panther*, 18 September 1971.

69. Olsen, *Last Man Standing*, 74.

70. Ernest Neal to Kathleen Cleaver, September 1971, Carton 5, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

71. *Guardian* [New York], 17 April 1971, Ron Wilkins Papers.

pondering joining the army so he could be discharged after he had been trained in weapons and guerrilla warfare—an idea that likely had occurred to others.⁷²)

Given the growing rift between the BPP and the CP, unsurprisingly the latter often subjected the former to searching critique. Charlene Mitchell, then emerging as the leader of the “Free Angela” movement, agreed with Cleaver on the “right to armed self-defense” but felt he and his comrades were absolutizing picking up the gun above all else. She reminded him in February 1971 of “differences we discussed in our meeting last year in Algiers,” including the ticklish question of “Anti-Sovietism.”⁷³ She objected unreservedly to Cleaver’s statement that “mass...mobilization” was outmoded and stressed her view that prioritizing armed struggle above all else was “foolish and dangerous”; besides, it was “stupidly arrogant” to aver that Moscow and Washington were partners conspiring against the planet—a widespread notion on the left then and not wholly Cleaver’s concoction.⁷⁴ Other comrades suspected that since Blacks did not control any significant aspects of the means of production, this meant an unacknowledged severe limitation of “Black Power” which flowed—precisely—from the means of production.

Mitchell was speaking at a moment of a seeming Communist comeback, likely propelling their admonitions, in that in 1972 their comrade, the Nevisian William Taylor, received a whopping 51,000 votes in a race for county supervisor in L.A. This occurred, said observer Earl Ofari, in the face of “little press coverage, few funds,” spending a measly \$2000. Yet a Communist got 15% of the vote in one of the more populous polities in the nation. This “more than doubled,” said Ofari, the “county wide total” of Mayor Sam Yorty then running for president, and nearly matched that of Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, running for the same office. Yet Blacks were only 20% of the electorate there, and Taylor claimed that “possibly one third of the district’s Black vote went for me.” In 1964 when he ran, steely incumbent Kenneth Hahn threatened that anyone who voted for

72. Statement by Richard Silver, ca. 1972, Box 47, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard. Cf. Wilbert Hauser, Oral History.

73. Charlene Mitchell to Eldridge Cleaver, 23 February 1971, Reel 40, Black Panther Documents. See Dorothy Healey, Oral History: “My dear friend, Charlene Mitchell, who has in some respects a very Machiavellian mind—she really thinks and plans ahead—decided she wanted to be the [CP] candidate [for president in 1968] because it would make her not only nationally known but internationally known as well....she had already moved to New York from Los Angeles to work in the National Office, simply because she wanted to live in New York....nobody had asked her to come. That was probably the start of the diminishing of the close relations between Charlene and me....her campaign was a very sorry campaign.” On the other hand, Healey was notorious for her difficult relationships with Black leaders, including William Taylor, James Jackson, even Franklin Alexander. See also FBI Report, 26 December 1968, 11-4486, Box 3, Dorothy Healey Papers-UCLA: Healey says her fellow Southland comrades pushed for Mitchell to run for president.

74. *People’s World*, 20 February 1971.

Taylor would be investigated by the FBI. He was even endorsed by the quirky *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*.⁷⁵

Even Taylor was “shocked” when he accumulated such a hefty vote total in the final ballot count. Once more, the FBI dispatched agents to the county voter registration office to check Taylor’s votes precinct by precinct. Soon, Taylor was addressing 600 at a meeting of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, founded by Dr. King. His issue? Stressing the need for Black representation.⁷⁶ Again, the *Sentinel* backed his opponent, Kenneth Hahn, as did Dr. Hudson of the NAACP.⁷⁷

What the Panthers did not bargain on—perhaps they were unaware—was the legacy of the Comintern, whereby Communists worldwide often would check with their U.S. counterparts before consorting with U.S. forces. When they were not so prone to do so, as in Havana, it is likely that the comrades there wished they had vetted the likes of Cleaver before granting him entrance. The fissures between the CP and the BPP were unhelpful to a number of the latter’s campaigns. Thus, Vivian Hallinan, matriarch of a formidable left-wing family in San Francisco that was close to the CP, reached Garry from Budapest, where she was “meeting with representatives of the World Federation of Democratic Youth from the African nations and Latin America.” She emphasized that “reps from South Africa want to start building support *now* for the U.N. Petition charging genocide against the BPP.” To that end, she was also collaborating with the Organization of African Unity, the trans-continental body based in Ethiopia. She had “given them copies of your appeal and the BPP paper.” Fortunately, “the South Africans consider the relations between U.S. Black Liberation forces and African movements very important”—and, Mandela’s African National Congress had an interlocking directorate with South African Communists. They were “interested in concrete methods to aid the BPP” but, naturally, “the work of Bill Patterson” was bruited. “We spoke at the huge anti-imperialist demonstration in Rome, thousands of voices chanted ‘Black Panther!’ over and over and raised clenched fists.”⁷⁸ As late as the Fall of 1970, the *Los Angeles Times* reported nervously, “Panthers now mature Russia says”—a false dawn indeed.⁷⁹ Yet at that moment of breakthrough, the BPP chose to throw in their lot with Maoists, then working on an alliance with U.S. imperialism, jeopardizing solidarity in Italy, for example, where the Communist Party was contending for state power.

75. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 16 June 1972.

76. *People’s World*, 13 May 1972.

77. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 3 February 1972. See Items, 1972, Box 393, Kenneth Hahn Papers. *People’s World*, 13 May 1972, and 10 June 1972. In Box 393, see Second District Analysis: Taylor received 19% of the vote in Mar Vista; 16% in Washington-Arlington; 20% near USC; 28% in Washington-Central; 17% in Western-Adams; 27% in the precinct where CP leader Healey resided.

78. “Vivian” to “Dear Charlie,” 29 April 1970, Reel 54, Black Panther Documents.

79. *Los Angeles Times*, 4 October 1970, Reel 14, Black Panther Documents.

It was not just Communist cadre who were having second and third thoughts about Cleaver's acumen. That same year the man who answered to the name of Major X Jukuma Campbell told "Brother Eldridge" directly that "after working with you in San Quentin, I have said...that [Cleaver] was always brilliant as a writer, yes, even as a theoretician he is brilliant but to be the one to put Theory into practice and act upon the Theorem in a rational and organized manner, No!" was his emphatic rebuke. "I am speaking from the experience of working with you."⁸⁰

Others at San Quentin were more admonitory. The SQ branch of the party reminded the Angeleno in exile and "his conspirators" that "you are an outcast" and "one day you'll be coming back here and we who are definitely your peers will judge you." But they had already arrived at a verdict: "You are guilty of treason and counter-revolutionary tactics," and they were unwilling to allow him to continue to "suffer in your perverted, degenerated pig-sty" since "death is the only solution to the problem you pose." After all, they continued with venom, "We know your reactionary ass. Many of us are still here from the time you left the joint," so "you'd better [pay] your last respects," they warned this "liar, murderer and thief" who "need[s] to be dead" since "you are like a mad dog carrying rabies." Like others, they found Cleaver much too fond of intoxicants, especially "Scotch," but in warning him in such a bloodcurdling manner they might have enticed him to do whatever was necessary in order to avoid returning to prison, for "One day you'll be back here," and would have to face enraged accusers.⁸¹ On "Malcolm X Day," 1971, marking the martyr's birthday,⁸² enhanced solidarity at San Quentin was forged to the detriment of Cleaver.

The authorities supplied numerous reasons why a Panther chapter would form behind bars. At Vacaville—the prison where I once taught—drugs like thorazine

80. Major X Jukuma Campbell to "Brother Eldridge," 16 November 1971, Carton 5, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

81. *The Black Panther*, 20 March 1971. See also Gifford, *Revolution or Death*, 276: Cleaver was "one of many Panthers who became addicted to crack," which "consumed" him—and also his ideological foes Hilliard and Newton. Imprisoned comrades had to be taken seriously, as their reach was thought to extend beyond the prison walls. See "Highlights of Director's Staff Meeting," 7 February 1972. Corrections-Administration-Director's Staff Meeting Minutes, F3717: 244, CSA: "Threat...eight bombs planted in Los Angeles State Building set to go off at 9:00 A.M. Monday morning, February 7." Minutes, 5 May 1972: "Requested emergency transfer of four members of the 'Angels Brotherhood...this was done': the presence of white supremacists served to spur Black activism." Minutes, 17 July 1972: "Racial incident at Tehachapi between Black and white inmates, a number of inmates were injured in an ensuing riot and 70 inmates were transferred." Minutes, 18 December 1972: "Cadena, reputed statewide leader of the Mexican Mafia and two other Mexican Mafia members were attacked by four members of the new family...fatally stabbed; Sandoval was thrown [from] a tier...12-inch rod was recovered." Minutes, 3 January 1973: "San Quentin...Muslim inmate...stabbed 23 times."

82. *The Black Panther*, 29 May 1971.

were, said the party, "given in large, continued dosages" leaving "the prisoners...extremely depressed." This was "genocide," they proclaimed.⁸³

A major service performed by the party was their response to the increasing incarceration of Black Americans in the Golden State. They charged that "Superior Court judges" in the Southland were "developing a strategy for putting a quota primarily on the amount of Black people and other non-whites that would be seated on juries," meaning "a great many Black persons now serving sentences in California prisons have been convicted on charges of stemming from Los Angeles." L.A. "proportionately sends more Blacks to prison than any other city in California," which was also a co-factor in galloping gentrification. Thus, in criminal cases striking Blacks from juries had become an art since they tended to acquit, and in civil cases "involving large corporations" they leaned in favor of plaintiffs, which "caused a great loss in money" to business. So, there was an ongoing move to dilute their presence by moving to countywide rather than citywide jury pools, even for city trials.⁸⁴

The SQ chapter was following the lead of Newton and his denunciation of the "defection" of Cleaver. Newton recalled a time when the Revolutionary Action Movement "criticized us for our aboveground action," as RAM "said they were underground." That was wrongheaded both then and now, he suggested, for it was Cleaver who caused the party to "defect...from the community." Reminiscing, he recalled "when I was in Donald Warden's Afro-American Association, I watched him try to make a reality of community control through Black Capitalism," but this was doomed since they "did not have a systematic ideology." Yes, he stressed, "we were the first *armed* police patrol," which struck a chord because their action was undergirded by ideology. Yet he blamed Cleaver for what he thought was the party's over-emphasis on picking up the gun, which was somewhat misleading on the Oaklander's part. He also blamed Cleaver for his profuse deployment of "profanity," which alienated all too many. Besides, uncomradely Cleaver did not often spring into action: "I pressed him to write and edit the paper but he wouldn't do it. The paper did not even come out every week until after Eldridge went to jail."⁸⁵ In apparent solidarity—though it could easily be interpreted as inconsistent with Newton's rebuke of Cleaver—the incarcerated leader "Chip" Fitzgerald took

83. *The Black Panther*, 26 June 1971: Named as culprits at Vacaville were "Dr. Lester J. Pope...Dr. Isaac Slaughter, Senior Psychiatrist...Dr. R.E. Prout, Chief Medical Officer...Dr. Arthur Nugent, Chief Psychiatrist."

84. *The Black Panther*, 21 August 1971.

85. *The Black Panther*, 17 April 1971. See also Newton, *Revolutionary Suicide*, 64, 71. Warden was "interested in getting Barry Goldwater's daughter to contribute money to his sister's sewing shop.... Goldwater's daughter became an honorary member of the Afro-American Association." As for the Revolutionary Action Movement, they "indulged in a lot of revolutionary talk, none of it underground," speaking of "Kenny Freeman...Isaac Moore, Doug Allen, Ernie Allen, Alex Papillon."

a full page to endorse "Revolutionary Intercommunal Warfare,"⁸⁶ melding armed struggle with Newton's latest buzzword. The well-respected Fitzgerald was short, strong, and muscular, his physical presence contributing to the acceptance of his ideas.⁸⁷

The pervasive nastiness unleashed by the internal split was destabilizing. Fay Stender, an exceedingly competent attorney on behalf of the party, reminded "Dear Huey" of her "collective unhappiness" with how she was being treated by comrades: "threats and a total breakdown of courtesy" was the norm, and she "hope[d] that we will not be treated that way by comrades."⁸⁸ From Harrisburg arrived the complaint from Ellis "Rick" Rey, Lieutenant Minister of Information in the party, who castigated Cleaver and other "revisionist fools" including Connie "The Drunk" Tabor, Richard "Deranged" Moore [Dhoruba bin Wahad], and Michael "Sillyway"[Cetshwayo] Tabor.⁸⁹

For her part, Connie Tabor, née Matthews, like many, seemed pained to be caught in the middle of a factional dispute. At least that is what she indicated to "Dear Huey." It was "not my intention to humiliate you" since "I love and respect you too much. I guess that I am just not capable of showing this" for "I did not realize that you would be offended when Eldridge and I do programs together." She defaulted to her Jamaican origins, explaining that "I understand American Blacks in practice" but not altogether well. "It has been very difficult for me here," speaking from exile, but her main theme was that she possessed a "special kind of love" for him. "I still see you as a person whom I love, admire and respect." In fact, she continued movingly, "I will always love you," as evidenced by the ineffable point that "I gave up my family and everything I had because I believed in the Party and still do"—but then she concluded sadly, "I am not fit to be in the Party."⁹⁰

86. *The Black Panther*, 8 May 1971, 16 January 1971, and 2 January 1971, for more on Fitzgerald. See also *The Black Panther*, 26 June 1971: The San Quentin chapter demands freedom for Fitzgerald. See also Huey Newton, "Black Capitalism Re-Analyzed," 5 June 1971, Reel 3, Black Panther Documents.

87. Pharr, *Nine Lives*, 141.

88. Fay Stender to "Dear Huey," 11 January 1971, Reel 36, Black Panther Documents. See also Pearlman, *Call Me Phaedra*. As revealed below, Stender, an important comrade and pioneer in both prisoners' rights and women's rights more generally, fell victim to internecine conflict. She was shot, rendered immobile, then committed suicide. Stender sacrificed mightily for the BPP. George Jackson, who "smoked nonstop" in meeting with her, "rubbed himself against her for relief...her colleagues [remained] shocked by her behavior." See Pearlman, *Call Me Phaedra*, 202; for a controversial analysis of the shooting of Stender, see 442-445.

89. Undated letter from Ellis "Rick" Rey, Reel 36, Black Panther Documents. See *The Black Panther*, 12 November 1977: Newton asserts that Connie Matthews was "unreliable" and, suspiciously, "Eldridge insisted she remain in Oakland," while Tabor "fell completely under Connie's spell." Then "Connie and Cetawayo disappeared, taking many of my personal papers with them."

90. Connie Matthews to Newton, n.d., Reel 30, Black Panther Documents.

The internal squabbles in the BPP reached Paris too. Jean Paul Sartre, the famed philosopher, was said to have been willing to collaborate with the BPP more avidly "if Eldridge didn't exist," for his "Maoist friends here tend to push armed struggle." He wanted a "3 way conversation" between them, which an interlocutor knew was "absurd." Newton "could still do such a book" in France but substituting "[Michel] Foucault" or even "[Herbert] Marcuse," Angela Davis's mentor, replacing Sartre.⁹¹ Put simply, like so many others, as Panther counsel Martin Kenner was told, "Sartre refuses to do [a] book with Huey because he doesn't want to take sides between Huey & Eldridge," an option pursued by others which weakened the party.⁹²

A more pointed critique arrived in Newton's mailbox in August 1971 from Rachel Holland of New Bedford, Mass. Her daughter, Kim Holland, was a "full time worker" for the party for a year and was now 16 years old and, she said stressfully, "became pregnant *on purpose* responding to party doctrine that birth control is genocide," this after toiling "easily 12 to 15 hours per day, every day" on the BPP's behalf. "Any group which tells Black women" this tripe "is dangerously out of contact with...women" especially "Black women," since "liberation will have to include freedom from sexual oppression."⁹³ Newton responded carefully, perhaps contradictorily, seeming to endorse abortion while insisting that "getting rid of human life is not the answer.... we can speak of abortion and birth control as a form of genocide."⁹⁴ (Yet later, in 1974, for whatever reason, Newton wrote that "for the next two years, all comrades are to practice some form of birth control."⁹⁵ Weeks later, his sartorial and gendered ukase was that "all women on the staff at the Learning Center, will wear a bra."⁹⁶)

As the party devolved into internecine conflict, the tenseness bled into wider Southland conflicts. The *Los Angeles Times* reported on a purported "NAACP...feud with Chicanos" concerning already declining "antipoverty" funds.⁹⁷ Then Congressman Ed Roybal, a pioneering Chicano elected official in the Southland, was reprimanded by the NAACP for failing to "strengthen" the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which battled job bias.⁹⁸ Alternatively, the NAACP joined the Young Lords, heavily Latino, at a 700-strong rally at what was dubbed accurately as the "Hall of (In)Justice" where "Masai" Hewitt spoke.⁹⁹

91. Letter from Paris to Newton, 10 September 1971, Reel 30, Black Panther Documents.

92. Letter to Martin Kenner, ca. 1972, Reel 30, Black Panther Documents.

93. Rachel Holland to Huey P. Newton, 9 August 1971, Reel 37, Black Panther Documents.

94. Huey P. Newton to Rachel Holland, 1 November 1971, Reel 37, Black Panther Documents.

95. Newton memo, 14 January 1974, Reel 14, Black Panther Documents.

96. Newton memo, 12 February 1974, Reel 14, Black Panther Documents.

97. *Los Angeles Times*, 20 January 1971, Carton 50, NAACP Papers-UCB.

98. Vima Canson to Bernice Rincon, 7 October 1971, Carton 50, NAACP Papers-UCB.

99. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 9 January 1970.

Thus, this split with the CP had material consequences, beyond adding to the lengthening list of Cleaver adversaries. The prolific historian Philip S. Foner, whose works on Cuba Cleaver sampled, was within the orbit of the CP, with global contacts besides. In seeking to translate and publish BPP works in Russian, he told Garry that "I will turn over fifty percent of all I receive from the book to the Black Panthers." He also bolstered his proposal by discussing that he "also arranged a meeting of Black college presidents with President Nixon" (Foner taught at Lincoln University, a Historically Black College). Then he "arranged the conference...last week between Black students and faculty of Lincoln and Howard with Attorney General [John] Mitchell." Alas, cozy deals were more difficult to broker once fissures between the two parties materialized.¹⁰⁰ Undeterred, Foner then sought to entice Newton, reminding him of his tie to "Du Bois whom I knew well," and dangling before him "international editions" of books on the BPP to be published in "England, France, Germany and Scandinavian countries, Cuba, the Soviet Union...please call collect."¹⁰¹

This could have provided a bonanza to the party for, as noted, there was a pre-existing base they cultivated among the growing number of Black soldiers in Germany particularly (my late older sister was married to one). Eventually, the Cleavers were barred from West Germany, as 5000 were rallying in support of the beleaguered Bobby Seale.¹⁰² Thousands of miles eastward in Seoul (where my sister and her spouse were also stationed at one point), 150 Black soldiers demonstrated on Malcolm's birthday, displeasing to military cops. Said an onlooker, "Windows were broken; tables and ovens overturned in the mess hall; slogans calling for equal treatment were shouted."¹⁰³ Further south, the *USS Kitty Hawk*, in and out of its base in the Philippines on bombing missions in Indochina, was rocked by anti-racist protests by Black sailors that, said a journalist, "shook the whole Navy."¹⁰⁴

The party's plans for the military were ambitious. In 1972 Newton was told by a comrade in a military law office "serving American GIs in Asia," that "as far as the government knows officially we offer only legal assistance. In reality we assist the men in building cadre within the GI movement. The politics of the project people are primarily Marxist" and in the "past six months our people have seen more and more Black GIs shipped to these bases." Correspondingly, "time and time again we have received requests for Panther literature," especially from South Korea and the Philippines (there was an "underground newspaper" in the latter archipelago). "Troops in both places are from 50 to 70% Black." A key

100. Philip S. Foner to Charles Garry, 26 May 1970, Reel 40, Black Panther Documents.

101. Philip S. Foner to Huey P. Newton, 25 September 1970, Reel 54, Black Panther Documents.

102. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 18 June 1971.

103. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 27 May 1971.

104. *People's World*, 24 January 1973. Cf. Truhe, *Against All Tides*.

operative was the radical attorney William Schaap, based in Okinawa—whom I knew and who became an effective campaigner against U.S. intelligence.¹⁰⁵

This activism abroad likely was reflected at home when the U.S. Department of Treasury reported that “seizures of contraband weapons in its western region are skyrocketing,” up “220 percent in the last fiscal year”—and were “often stolen from West Coast military arsenals” or “mailed into the country by servicemen in Vietnam.” Fort Ord in California was suspected when “94 pounds of C4 plastic explosives and 39 hand grenades” were found near Isla Vista.¹⁰⁶ During this time, the Marine base at El Toro near the Irvine campus was—figuratively—afire. Chancellor Daniel Aldrich of the UC campus was told in November 1970 that since January 1969 there had been an astonishing “40,934 bombings, attempts and threats.” Blameworthy, it was thought, were Angela Davis and fellow activist Tom Hayden.¹⁰⁷ Illuminating on campus, said the chancellor, was the “burning of a University automobile a few days before the bank burning.”¹⁰⁸

Of course, Cleaver in particular may not have been preoccupied with raising funds, despite the penury of many of the comrades there. Subsequently, he claimed that he regularly carried a bag while in Algiers with \$50,000 in cash and, perhaps driven by lumpen compulsions, “we started running stolen cars from Europe”—not to mention being distracted by the “several wives” he claimed he was maintaining.¹⁰⁹

Besides the above, ill-designed to endear the party with Algerian comrades, were other distractions in Algiers. My squirrely former classmate John Semida and his partner, Diane Dubler, were headed to Algiers and quite suspiciously requested contact with liberation movements in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau. He had gained authenticity by participating in Panther solidarity in Copenhagen.¹¹⁰

The attempted infiltration of Semida into the Algiers compound was an aspect of an extraordinary campaign of harassment and intimidation of the Panthers, befitting Hoover’s nostrum that they were a “dangerous” force. Witnesses marching to Capitol Hill in order to provide ever more lurid revelations about the

105. “Pat” to Newton, 14 September 1972, Reel 31, Black Panther Documents. See also on same reel the underground journal *Seasick*, published in Subic Bay in 1972.

106. *Independent Journal of Marin County*, 9 October 1970, Box 5, Angela Davis Legal Defense Collection.

107. C.E. Ketchum to Chancellor Aldrich, 6 November 1970, Box 23, Series 3, Central Records Collection, UC-Irvine.

108. Chancellor Aldrich to Robert Longman, 11 November 1970, Box 23, Series 3, Central Records Collection, UC-Irvine.

109. Post-1976 statement, Carton 1, *Cleaver Papers-UCB*. See also undated statement of unclear provenance, Box 7, David Bernstein Papers-UCLA: “Our Kansas City chapter had been fucked up because of June Hilliard’s visit, at which time...[he] fuck damn near all the sisters in the chapter. The same with Masai in North Carolina. Conn [sic], New York, Chicago. The same with David. The same with Emory.”

110. Memo from John Semida, 7 June 1971, Box 1, Cleaver-TAMU.

Panthers became a common occurrence. Thus, in early 1971, appearing before the Senate was Thomas Edward Mosher, who threw in nuggets about Robert F. Williams and CP leader Gus Hall amidst his unloading on the Panthers. "I saw...Cleaver in Cuban army fatigues with a submachine gun.... I have been present [in Cuba] in groups with upwards of 80 pounds of plastique and dynamite with detonators and with automatic weapons." He was asked if a Havana based grouping had "issued any communiques of the struggle of the Black Panthers in the United States." "Numerous, yes," he responded. He thought the group in question—Organization of Solidarity with Asia, Africa and Latin America—was more ambitious than the Comintern, defunct for several decades.¹¹¹

The bane of these movements of various stripes was the reality of infiltration by agents of the state, bent on chaos. Darthard Perry, for example, also known as Ed Riggs, Bill Perry, John Moore and "Othello," worked as an agent for the FBI from 1968 to 1975 and happened to be at UCLA in January 1969 at the time of the anti-BPP fracas; he said he saw accused assailants fleeing with Brandon Cleary of the FBI.¹¹² The violence aimed at the Panthers inexorably led to the same toward other presumed dissidents. By Spring 1970, what were called "armed thugs" sought to "murder" four cadre from the Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party in the sixth attack on the headquarters or functions of this group and affiliates in the past two years.¹¹³

Fertile conditions for this trend were created by a still potent ultra-right wing which, like the FBI, saw the party and those like them as the major threat to the status quo. San Bernardino remained inflamed in 1971: The self-styled "Citizens Law Enforcement Group" spoke of "a visit from Major Mike Murray of the American Nazi Party." It was a "nice visit," said the man known as "Bill" of CLEG, even though the visitor "needs a civil war, revolution or major race war to help him obtain the results he expects." Quite helpfully, "ANP" was "willing to help CLEG in any way that it can."¹¹⁴ Similarly, in Kansas City, cops had intimacies with both the ultra-right Minutemen and the Ku Klux Klan, contributing to the desire of the Black community for armed self-defense.¹¹⁵

Thus, conditions were prevalent for fissiparousness of the wildest sort. Cleaver was on the warpath after the party expulsions, to his credit denouncing

111. U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Testimony of Thomas Edward Mosher, Hearings of Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration and Internal Security Act, February-March 1971, Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1971, Reel 15, Black Panther Documents. See also U.S. Congress, House, 92nd Congress, 1st Session, Committee on Internal Security, "Gun Barrel Politics: The Black Panther Party, 1966-1971," Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1971, Box 225, Records of American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California-UCLA (abbrev. ACLU Records-UCLA).

112. Affidavit of Darthard Perry, ca. 1975, Reel 1, Black Panther Documents.

113. Release, 27 May 1970, Carton 75, NAACP Papers-UCB.

114. "Bill" to "Charles," 28 January 1971, CUAC, Bay Area Reports, Box 69, 93 04 12 D4178 F, CSA.

115. Magarella, *Black Panther in Exile*, 67.

that of ji Jaga especially. Naturally, he was bitterly hostile toward Newton and Hilliard and their "revisionist clique," equating them with Moscow (he was in the pole position as the embodiment of China, of course), but he went further in speaking to the well-circulated *Los Angeles Free Press*, "including Charles Garry" in his indictment. Typically, he sought to feminize Hilliard, recalling the Oakland shootout of April 1968 that resulted in the slaying of "Little" Bobby Hutton: it was Hilliard, he charged heatedly, who "threw away his gun and ran and hid under a bed in a woman's house," which was "cowardly." But he also implied that a division over the feasibility of "armed struggle" was a cause of this rancor with the Newton "clique."¹¹⁶ (As noted in the opening page of this book, when Cleaver's comrades sought arms for the armed struggle, they turned to "revisionist" Prague.¹¹⁷)

Whereas Cleaver was busily making pronouncements from Algiers, Hilliard was facing hard times in prison. His attorney, Benjamin Dreyfus, told CP counsel John Abt that "dismissing the action upon refusal of the government to disclose...wiretapped recordings" was his priority.¹¹⁸

Cleaver was floundering. As a harbinger of his subsequent career as a designer of sexy men's pants, he had begun composing songs. The cause for flailing was propelled in part by what underlay his anguished words of March 1972. As one analyst put it, "he bitterly denounce[d] the Chinese for embracing Nixon.... 'this is cause for alarm,'" he opined.¹¹⁹ In sum, Cleaver and the Panthers made a faulty bet, wagering that China would surpass Moscow and Havana as a locus of world revolution; instead, China sided with U.S. imperialism in Southern Africa and elsewhere, a vinegary swig to swallow for those who tailed after

116. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 23 April 1971. The construction of masculinity haunted the BPP and a good deal of Black America and the U.S. itself. See Thomas Home, Oral History: This Panther was asked, "Why do you fight so much?" Home's father responded, of his son's incarceration, "'They trying to make a girl out of him.' That's exactly what he [said]...." And Thomas Home responded, "Well, one guy sat down beside me and put his arm around me and said, 'How you doing.' And I just put my elbow up his nose because I know what he wanted. He thought I was weak and he's going to try to turn me out. That's what they do in there. If you [are] weak, you end up being a girl. If you [are] strong, you stay a man. That's what happened." See also Ouagadougou, *Black Guerrilla Family*, 19: George Jackson was "trying to kill Joey for saying he would 'punk' him," i.e., engage in coerced sexual relations with him.

117. Minutes of Meeting, 21 June 1971, Box 1, Cleaver-TAMU.

118. Benjamin Dreyfus to John Abt, 7 May 1971, Reel 38, Black Panther Documents. See also Benjamin Dreyfus to Warren Christopher, 29 April 1971, Reel 51, Black Panther Documents. Hilliard's attorney was "immeasurably grateful" to this future U.S. Secretary of State—based in L.A.—concerning the "wiretap problem"; he was thankful for "your courtesy, kindness and great assistance."

119. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 10 March 1972. For more on Cleaver's songs and film treatment, see undated, ca. 1971, Reel 19, Black Panther Documents.

Mao—though I can attest that there were those who denied this reality even after it became obvious.¹²⁰

In October 1971, Newton was in China, alongside Elaine Brown and Robert Bay, where he said that “we have new strength” as a result.¹²¹ What followed was a multi-page supplement on China in the party press with little understanding of the import of the entente with U.S. imperialism.¹²² Utterly relaxed, Newton was pictured smoking a Chinese cigarette and discussing how he requested that Premier Zhou Enlai intervene on behalf of the U.S. oppressed,¹²³ apparently oblivious as to how this was inconsistent with the new partnership of the two giants. A huge picture of Newton shaking hands with Zhou made it to the front page of the tabloid *New York Post*.¹²⁴

* * *

Back in L.A., the Panthers remained entangled in dirty tricks and controversies. Among the former were the couple identified as “Styaunio and Stella Carter,” drawn as “reactionary fools of Jordan Downs,” who “operated a Free Breakfast for Children Program out of their house at 2115 East 103rd Street” for the “past three months.” But they were counterfeit, fraudsters fooling folks into thinking they were Panthers, while taking their grift to a new level: per the Panthers—in their estimation—they threatened to “bomb” the homes of neighbors “if they wouldn’t cooperate” in the masquerade. Similarly, they had “stolen clothes off the clotheslines of...neighbors” and “collected money” too.¹²⁵

It is unclear what befell these scammers, but one of their protectors’ fate was evident: In early 1971 the Panthers described in a grim fashion, “pig in Los Angeles executed.” He was at 112th and Success near Nickerson Gardens. “The masses from their porch steps or their windows, witnessed” this evening bloodshed. There was a “house to house search” as witnesses paid a price, as “helicopters with their high powered light” illuminated the night, while, it was said proudly, the “executioner blended in with the people.”¹²⁶

The flummoxing of the breakfast program was of a piece with the traducing of BPP initiatives. Thus, when Gloria Rodriguez arrived at the “Bunchy” Carter

120. Horne, *White Supremacy Confronted*, passim. Cf. Aaron J. Leonard, *Heavy Radicals: The FBI's Secret Wars on American Maoists: The Revolutionary Union/Revolutionary Communist Party, 1955-1980*, Alresford, U.K.: Zero, 2014.

121. *The Black Panther*, 16 October 1971.

122. *The Black Panther*, 29 November 1971.

123. *San Francisco Sun-Reporter*, 16 October 1971.

124. *New York Post*, 9 October 1971, Reel 24, Black Panther Documents.

125. *The Black Panther*, 30 January 1971.

126. *The Black Panther*, 30 January 1971.

Free Clinic with what was portrayed as a "severe case of epilepsy," the LAPD detained her on the premise that she was actually a party member and tried to turn her into a spy on them.¹²⁷ The Community Center in L.A. sponsored by the party, at 2116 East 113th, endured continuous harassment with the authorities even paying someone to crawl through a window in the middle of the night in order to, as was said, "assist the pigs 'entry" in an "illegal search for weapons." Then they "deliberately set afire" the site and "wantonly ripped apart" its contents. They spent "four to five hours destroying the Center." They "confiscated a typewriter, the daily telephone logbook and two purses," effectively destabilizing what had "functioned as the nucleus for revolutionary activity," especially in the "nearby Imperial Courts project," a locus for the Black poor and working class.¹²⁸

Down the freeway at Camp Pendleton, Lance Corporal William Chatman, a Black Marine and former chairman of Movement for a Democratic Military, was among those caught in what the party termed acidly as the "wheels of injustice" successfully "railroad[ing] GIs in stockades."¹²⁹

In short, Black men continued to be routed into dank cells. Rising at San Quentin was a Panther chapter, the party exhorting that a "new era has arisen." But even this analyst saw this upside arriving with a downside in that it provided a "new excuse and pretext for locking brothers in the hole" if in "possession of inflammatory literature"—the party paper, for example. "Treat us in accord with the Geneva mandate" was the reasonable demand.¹³⁰ But how this could be accomplished while alienating Moscow and Havana, while cozying up to a China hellbent on cutting a deal with U.S. imperialism apparently did not register. The BPP maintained stoutly that this was the price to be paid for its position as "vanguard...in the empire."¹³¹

The party's role in organizing the Las Vegas Community Information Center at 1993 Hassell Avenue was hardly compensatory¹³² and, in any case, swiftly came under assault by the authorities.¹³³ This boomtown was in many ways a playground for Angelenos and, like L.A., it contained, said the party, "one of the most squalid ghettos" anywhere. By the Spring of 1971 "celebrities like Jane Fonda and Reverend Ralph Abernathy" in league with the party amassed to organize a "protest march of some 1500 angry poor through the Strip"—the "first in the Strip's history," said a reporter—to bring attention to this scandal.¹³⁴

127. *The Black Panther*, 13 February 1971.

128. *The Black Panther*, 13 February 1971.

129. *The Black Panther*, 20 February 1971.

130. *The Black Panther*, 27 February 1971.

131. *The Black Panther*, 20 February 1971.

132. *The Black Panther*, 13 February 1971.

133. *The Black Panther*, 9 January 1971. *The Black Panther*, 17 June 1972: "Las Vegas Black man run out of business...the case of Bobby Jones."

134. *The Black Panther*, 3 April 1971. *The Black Panther*, 26 March 1977: Chair Elaine Brown in "two day whirlwind stay" in Las Vegas, terms it "outright plantation"; BPP chapter reopens at 1728

Las Vegas was crawling with celebrities, often, like Fonda, willing to donate to radical causes. Thus, Newton's turn to film criticism, praising the film helmed by Black auteur Melvin Van Peebles, *Sweet Sweetback*. "I have seen the film several times," he told his audience, "and I have also talked to about 50-60 others who have seen it and each time I understand more" and was even more impressed. The sound and lighting were unimpressive, however; yet, he urged, "buy the record and the book," he declaimed in page after page, since the movie "blows my mind every time I talk about it."¹³⁵ (Revealingly, the locale of this film, said a critic, was "visually identifiable as Los Angeles.")¹³⁶ Repaying the lavish compliment, Van Peebles described himself as a "Guerrilla" cineaste.¹³⁷ The bearded filmmaker was seeking "quite unsuccessfully" to get a copy of the party paper with this glowing review but, in a sign of the times, "the papers are purchased as soon as they arrive." His note was written on the stationery of *Watermelon Man*, his upcoming and similarly popular film,¹³⁸ whose star, Godfrey Cambridge, was a public backer of the BPP.¹³⁹

Earlier, students at Oakland's Laney College, a party stronghold, were promoting the movie *Burn!*, like the *Battle of Algiers* a creation of the Italian filmmaker Gillo Pontecorvo and starring Panther backer Marlon Brando. "The same movement that has continued on to today. This is the film they don't want you to see, see it!"¹⁴⁰ (Suitably impressed, Brando was cited for the thesis that he planned to devote his life to Black Power.¹⁴¹) Then the Panthers turned to critiques of television shows featuring Black cops and agents, a relatively new genre, including *The Mod Squad* and *I Spy*.¹⁴²

The Panthers carried stories that these cop shows should have used instead of their insipid weekly narratives. Lemuel James, a former Jefferson High School student, was reported as "kidnapped," detained on a "jaywalking warrant" while selling the party newspaper. The culprits were from the notorious 77th precinct of the LAPD.¹⁴³ Soon Larry Topps, Johnny Bryant and Macarthur Ballard were accosted on Imperial Highway by the LAPD and by sheriff's deputies brandishing shotguns; somehow Topps did not survive their encounter.¹⁴⁴ Then in Altadena, Wilbur Gene Bowers was murdered in his home by cops.¹⁴⁵ A "police murder" of

West Nelson Street in North Las Vegas. Cf. *The Black Panther*, 4 June 1977: "BPP sponsored drill team captures first place...47 girl[s], five boy[s]" and a "10 member drum corps."

135. *The Black Panther*, 19 June 1971.

136. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 21 May 1971.

137. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 14 May 1971.

138. Melvin Van Peebles to Huey Newton, 23 June 1971, Reel 15, Black Panther Documents.

139. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 18 July 1968.

140. Undated leaflet, 17-18 and 19 December ca. 1970, Reel 14, Black Panther Documents.

141. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 18 April 1968.

142. *The Black Panther*, 3 July 1971.

143. *The Black Panther*, 6 February 1971.

144. *The Black Panther*, 13 February 1971.

145. *The Black Panther*, 3 April 1971.

a 13-year-old after seen "shoplifting" a coat was reported.¹⁴⁶ Marcia Blaker, a former Communications liaison for the party, reputedly born of "Jewish parentage," was shot.¹⁴⁷ This was "Black Genocide," the party cried.¹⁴⁸

Under the guise of halting drug trafficking, the LAPD subjected the family of Larcell James in Compton to intense harassment for over a year. The son, Richard Lawrence, was a veteran of the war in Vietnam and winner of the Bronze Star, yet he was subjected to an asphyxiating chokehold, then, as was said, they "shot the brother in the stomach." This brutalizing LAPD campaign included what was called an "annual pre-holiday assault," this one in December 1971. The party's center in Pasadena was "literally set afire" as nine shots were fired into their daycare center.¹⁴⁹ (As this story was reported, the fire department in L.A.—possibly relatedly—had hired 12 Black men in the past two decades out of 2435 who were hired; in the early 1960s, there were 86 Black firefighters predominantly in two all-Black stations—34th and Central and 14th and Central.¹⁵⁰)

As the number of Black firefighters increased, the otherwise recalcitrant LAPD tiptoed toward reform, allowing Black cops to wear their hair in the popular "Afro" style by 1971.¹⁵¹ "There is no doubt that there is a racial revolt brewing within the LAPD," concluded a reporter the next year, but it was not apparent that even that could quash the continuing squashing of Blacks.¹⁵² For cops continued to promiscuously deploy "throwaways" or extra guns planted on those they shot to provide a rationale for their felonies. Black officers, maybe less than 5% of the force, continued to shrink in perpetual fear of unwarranted discipline.¹⁵³ (In 1967, 4% of the LAPD was Negro.¹⁵⁴)

As this reign of terror—and obstinance—was unfolding, the leading cadre of the party were mostly on trial as a result of the December 1969 siege of their headquarters and this hampered the fightback tremendously. Jury selection began in May 1971, after a protracted number of pre-trial maneuvers.¹⁵⁵ Valiantly, they sought to remain au courant, embossed with a steely militancy. Wayne Pharr was one of these defendants and, at least for a while, he noticed that "posters of Bunchy [Carter]," the martyr of January 1969 at UCLA and the standard-bearer of radicalism, "were showing up everywhere...and his poems were being recited

1446. *The Black Panther*, 11 December 1971.

1447. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 16 December 1971.

1448. *The Black Panther*, 10 April 1971.

1449. *The Black Panther*, 11 December 1971.

1550. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 1 April 1971. See also edition of 16 August 1973: Suspicious fire at Wyadsworth Avenue Elementary school in South L.A.

1551. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 16 September 1971.

1552. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 7 September 1972.

1553. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 14 September 1972.

1554. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 18 May 1967.

1555. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 11 June 1971.

at major events." When Carl Hampton visited from Houston, they were keen to teach him how to form a Panther chapter there. For a while, they were able to maintain their headquarters on Central Avenue, with eight rooms upstairs, including a newsroom, a communications room, a conference room and more. Moreover, political education continued: "We still engaged in the study of the Red Book [of Mao], Marxism-Leninism," etc. This continued when behind bars where they studied Fanon too—and also conspicuously "Eldridge," for "Huey was taking us to unimaginable lows." Pharr was ironically boastful about the fact that the LAPD was the "first" to organize a SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics team, a kind of anti-guerrilla force) that was "formed specifically to deal with us!"

Yet this was just one aspect of an overall offensive seeking to undermine the Party, from their being treated while incarcerated more harshly than the mass murderer Charles Manson—a "little bitty guy"—to fighting rats in jail. Once defendant Roland Freeman, with a cast on a limb, put dead ones there, then marched into the courtroom and "pulled the...rats out of his cast, one by one...everyone in the room was stunned and disgusted." Another time ji Jaga [Pratt], Roland and other comrades began attacking "Huey-ites" in court leading to a wild fracas—this in the face of Sandra Pratt receiving "death threats from the Huey-ites." At once a rattled judge pulled a pistol as "blood [was] dripping on the courtroom floor." In jail there was the added problem of "whites and Mexicans [pitted] against the Black inmates." This was trying for these youthful defendants, all between the ages of 19 and 23—except ji Jaga, who was 29.

Finally, on 2 December 1971, the defendants were found not guilty on all charges related to conspiracy and murder. There were 63 separate verdicts against a total of 12 defendants and the jury deadlocked against eight defendants. ji Jaga and eight others were found guilty of illegal possession of weapons. Convicted, in addition to Pratt, were Robert Bryan, Wayne Pharr, Willie Stafford, Tommy Williams, Renee Moore, Paul Redd, Albert Armour, and Craig Williams. Two of the defendants were acquitted of all charges. There were eight men and four women on the jury. Five were Negroes. It was a seven-month trial with 11 days of jury deliberation, the "longest trial" in L.A. history to that point, said Pharr. Their counsel, Leo Branton, who had won plaudits during the Smith Act trial, exhibited the continuity of struggle by performing masterfully here too, all the more crucial since Pharr maintained that his own attorney was an "informant." Appropriately, climbing the charts then was "Machine Gun," the tune by the Isley Brothers, a soundtrack to struggle. Yet, despite this militant sheen, the reality was that while this trial was unfolding, all Southland offices of the party were shuttered. Or as Pharr put it euphemistically, the trial "contributed to a decrease in productivity for the party."¹⁵⁶ Their case had suffered a setback when Melvin

156. Pharr, *Nine Lives*, 123, 180, 191, 198, 241, 247, 250, 259, 215. See *Los Angeles Free Press*, 31 December 1971: The jury of 13 included "six Blacks, four Chicanos and two whites." The defense sought to undermine Melvin Smith's testimony by relying upon that of Louis Tackwood. There were

"Cotton" Smith, an erstwhile comrade, testified against the Panthers.¹⁵⁷ Partially bald with a bristling mustache, neatly trimmed, he had a long rap sheet: armed robbery, eight counts of forgery, stolen firearms and burglary. His testimony was lurid, especially targeting ji Jaga, who was said to teach courses on how "to kill with...a pencil." It was ji Jaga who was said to lead expeditions into sewer tunnels with the purpose of placing explosives underneath the notorious 77th Street police precinct. He was fingered for the arsenal uncovered: Thompson sub-machine guns, shotguns, pistols, M1 and M14 rifles.¹⁵⁸ Smith was on the stand for five days, continuing to pepper his testimony with the provocative: Defendants were "throwing bombs out of the window" as the siege proceeded.¹⁵⁹

It was a trial involving hundreds of exhibits and 11 days of jury deliberation. Sidney Thompson, one of the Black jurors, recalled a Euro-American woman juror who would "whisper...get Pratt," since "this is war" and "anything is fair," she said. An observer found Pharr to be "not very talkative" with a "worried look on his face," while ji Jaga was "stone faced. A smile never swept over his face" while defendant Renee Moore was "emotional" and "talkative." As for the prime witness, "Cotton" Smith, Thompson found his testimony to be a smorgasbord of "lies." Simply put: he "could not be trusted."¹⁶⁰ The defendants were frog-marched into court in chains, while the female defendants involved in the Charles Manson murders—all Euro-American—"went into court looking like they had just come from a fashion show," said one keen observer.¹⁶¹

Even as this travesty was unwinding, sheriff's deputies ambushed and attacked about a dozen Panthers on their way to arraignment. The comrades were outnumbered five to one and several endured serious injuries, including a

10 defense attorneys, led by Branton. A prospective juror, a Compton High School teacher and member of the Peace & Freedom Party, was ousted by the prosecution: *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 8 July 1971. For more on this see *The Black Panther*, 26 December 1970. Cf. Ben Waddell, Oral History: This Panther, who studied martial arts, recalled that earlier in prisons, the authorities for entertainment forced Negroes and those of Mexican ancestry to "fight to the death" and "they'd kill" the one that lost. He also highlighted the travails of other BPP cadre in San Diego, including Ike Chanel, Buddy Houser, Willie Ward, and Warren Henry.

157. *Los Angeles Times*, 21 July 1971. See also Affidavit of Melvin Carl Smith, March 1969, Box 7, David Bernstein Papers-UCLA. In same collection, see Transcript of Interview with Melvin Smith, September 1996, Box 12. See also Polygraph and interview with Louis Tackwood, informer, 13 October 1971, Reel 63, Black Panther Documents: Not only does he confirm that Smith was an informer too but that he—Tackwood—alleges that he helped to subsidize Karenga's forces.

158. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 29 July 1971. Cf. *The Black Panther*, 1 January 1972: "Ceasefire verdict in L.A." As for "Cotton" Smith, when he "described bomb-making classes, gun classes, 'underground guerrilla activities,' trips through the sewers...plans to kill police and blow up police stations...at times the jury itself even laughed at him openly." For "two years ago," the LAPD "attempted to carry out the murder of every member" of the party in L.A.

159. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 5 August 1971.

160. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 6 January 1972.

161. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 30 January 1970.

fractured skull. "Does it sound like a movie about another country?" one journalist inquired: "the movie is called Z."¹⁶²

By early 1972, weeks after the trial concluded, Adrian Lyde reflected the view of millions of Southlanders, as he told Newton and Seale, "I live in Long Beach...and I don't hear to[o] much about the Panthers in this city," so said this "12th grade student" at "Poly High School."¹⁶³

The problem was that the internecine inter-party conflict—not accidentally—was demobilizing.¹⁶⁴ A baffled onlooker was stunned to find that for almost two years—from the siege to the trial's conclusion—there were "no demonstrations, no rallies, a weak defense committee."¹⁶⁵ Journalist Emily Gibson also noticed that it was "hard to build 'mass defense'" for ji Jaga's succeeding case in light of "internal differences" within the BPP. The "pallor on his skin" that Ofari detected in mid-1972 doubtlessly was a product of too many hours spent inside in a cell.¹⁶⁶ When Panther factions were actually brawling in the courtroom, it was not easy to mobilize masses.¹⁶⁷

By August of 1972 ji Jaga was convicted for a murder he did not commit after 10 days of jury deliberation. "You're wrong," he cried in frustration, "I didn't kill that woman. You racist dogs. I'm not going to sit here and listen to the rest of this." Three Negro men sat on the jury.¹⁶⁸

In sum, this demobilization was particularly harmful to ji Jaga's interests, explicating why he spent almost three decades behind bars. This occurred as he had attracted popular attention after jumping bail of \$30,000, not to mention his heroism of December 1969 which a Black reporter recalled "looked like a scene from Vietnam...officers ignited dynamite charges on the roof."¹⁶⁹ When he was snared and extradited from Dallas in early 1971, the outcry was relatively muted.¹⁷⁰ Even when in November 1971 he was punching, kicking and brawling in the courtroom with his adversaries, it reached the press but did not stir mass protests.¹⁷¹ Donald Freed observed that solidarity was lacking since it was felt that

162. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 13-19 February 1970.

163. Adrian Lyde to Newton and Seale, 18 January 1972, Reel 36, Black Panther Documents.

164. Cf. Neil Herring for Margolis and McTernan to Fay Stender, 14 August 1969, Reel 41, Black Panther Documents: "We seem to be having as little cooperation from the Los Angeles Black Panthers, in criminal cases in which their own asses are at stake, as you described in relation to draft counseling efforts. This, despite direct admonitions from both Charles Garry and Bobby Seale to the Los Angeles Black Panther leadership."

165. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 31 December 1971.

166. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 22 June 1972.

167. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 16 November 1971.

168. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 3 August 1972.

169. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 24 September 1970.

170. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 18 February 1971.

171. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 18 November 1971.

siding with ji Jaga effectively meant taking a stance on internal party disputes; thus the courtroom was virtually empty throughout.¹⁷²

When Elaine Brown denied that ji Jaga was "in charge of guerrilla forces," it was unclear if she was simply seeking to dim his brightening glow. She continued, "as for the Panthers being part of a Communist conspiracy to set up revolutions which would form pacts with other countries," this was similarly false: "Communists are working with the working class," she quipped, "but we are the 'left outs.'"¹⁷³ Yet she was not quoted when soon thereafter his comrade Roger "Captain Blue" Louis [Lewis] was convicted for having homemade bombs, captured alongside ji Jaga, and he too admitted that he was a "revolutionary."¹⁷⁴ Captain Blue, "Long" John Washington, ji Jaga, Ronald Freeman and Richard Johns were indicted by September 1970 for allegedly kidnapping and beating what was depicted as "an emotional teenage boy who was formerly in the party. The only evidence" was the purported victim's testimony—still, ji Jaga and Washington skipped a court appearance.¹⁷⁵ Ronald Freeman, 25, said the BPP journal, had been jailed since September 1969 and was the "victim of [a] new and more sophisticated type of legal genocide," waylaid by a "racist judge," and also "being victimized by an aspiring petty bourgeoisie jackanape 'defense' attorney Ben Wyatt,"¹⁷⁶ whom they characterized as akin to an agent.

Across the continent in Manhattan, a similar trial was unwinding. Just as the presence of ji Jaga and his presumed role in the "underground" seemed to engender a particular venom in the L.A. courtroom, the seeming idea that the "Panther 21" were also part of this grouping led to a similar result in New York. (From the beginning of the Southland Panthers, says one scholar, there was an "armed underground" led by ji Jaga.¹⁷⁷) As on the West Coast, there was attention to the writings of Mao Zedong being an influence on the defendants. In Manhattan, there was an interminable parade of guns presented as evidence. There were vague references to defendant Afeni Shakur¹⁷⁸ referring to "heavy artillery," though this was likely a metaphor. A witness also testified that she "had said every member must learn to operate 10 weapons," and that "teach[ing] guerrilla warfare tactics" was mandatory¹⁷⁹—not illegal *prima facie*. By early 1971, as Southland

¹⁷² *Los Angeles Free Press*, 7 January 1972. Freed may have had other reasons for steering clear of this controversy. See Freed to "Friends," 14 November 1975, Series 2, Box 42, Newton Foundation: COINTELPRO has document on an assassination attempt of him to be blamed on the BPP. He then resided in L.A. at 2337 Greenfield.

¹⁷³ *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 16 July 1970.

¹⁷⁴ *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 27 August 1970.

¹⁷⁵ *Los Angeles Free Press*, 18 September 1970.

¹⁷⁶ *The Black Panther*, 1 August 1970.

¹⁷⁷ Chard, *Nixon's War*, 67.

¹⁷⁸ See *Right On!*, November-December 1972, Reel 25, Black Panther Documents: See lengthy article on "Tupac Amaru," whose name was inherited by Afeni Shakur's son, rapper and actor.

¹⁷⁹ "Panther 21 Trial News," No. 11 (16-19 November 1970) and No. 15 (14-17 December 1970), BBox 1, BPP Harlem Records.

Panthers remained trapped in travails, defendant Lumumba Shakur was said to possess a "briefcase full of dynamite" and that he sought to "sew a strap in the inside...of [a] gray tweed overcoat" that "could hang a 25 inch sawed off shotgun."¹⁸⁰

Although many of the Panthers on both coasts were able to escape lengthy sentences, such was not the case for ji Jaga, though it had long been known by the authorities that when this crime took place in Santa Monica, he was not even in the county (he was in the Bay Area) let alone this beachside town. The FBI had wiretap logs that showed as much.¹⁸¹ Kathleen Cleaver blamed Newton and Hilliard for ji Jaga's plight: He was "set up," she said, "they purged him and then lied about him," as he was "manipulated by the Manchurian Candidate," her nickname for Newton, "someone who was tampered with while he was in the hands of the pigs." It is unclear if she helped his case, however, by associating him publicly with the "clandestine" struggle, which should have been kept at least semi-secret for effectiveness at that juncture. She went further to suggest that her spouse could return to become "part of the underground liberation struggle."¹⁸²

The overriding issue was captured by Eldridge Cleaver when he said his fellow Angeleno was "the most feared and hated Black Panther in Babylon," charging further that ji Jaga was "betrayed by [David] Hilliard" as his expulsion created an uproar.¹⁸³

The attorney, Johnnie Cochran, exhibited steadfastness in his attention to this case that, he said, "lasted twenty-seven years." During this period, the authorities "wiretapped my telephone to listen to constitutionally protected conversations, had an informant secreted in the defense environs and refused to inform us—as mandated by law—that the star prosecution witness was a confidential informant."¹⁸⁴

The latter reference was to Julio Butler, a veteran of the war in Korea who joined the county sheriff's brigade in 1956 and left in 1960. He had been active in the Black Congress and joined the BPP about 1968-69. Once he returned to his apartment and found, he said, ji Jaga, Long John Washington and Roger "Blue" Lewis beating Ollie Taylor. He felt compelled to join in the fracas, after Washington reputedly "put a gun" to his head and seemingly pulled the trigger. This was representative, he said, of the "Black Mafia" tendency in the party. ji Jaga begged to differ as he testified that Butler was the sadist, knocking out the teeth of one comrade, stomping another and striking Ollie Taylor.¹⁸⁵ At this

180. "New York 21 Trial News," No. 21 (25-28 January 1971), Box 1, BPP Harlem Records.

181. Swearingen, *FBI Secrets*, 86.

182. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 31 October 1971.

183. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 19 March 1971.

184. Cochran, *A Lawyer's Life*, 182, 101. See also Transcript of trial, 10 July 1972, Reel 46, Black Panther Documents.

185. "Respondent's Brief on the Merits," in Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles, Case #A267020, in re: Elmer G. Pratt on Habeas Corpus, ca. 1979, Box 7, David Bernstein Papers.

juncture, Butler was believed. The fifth habeas corpus petition of ji Jaga in 1996, after being sentenced to life in August 1972 for the December 1968 murder of Caroline Olsen, failed, and he remained in prison.¹⁸⁶

Butler was an unsteady reed to rely upon. The authorities knew he had bought a Thompson machine gun in October 1968 and a .45 caliber pistol by October 1968, just after being recruited to the party weeks earlier. But this 6' tall, 178-pound man was expelled from the ranks in August 1969.¹⁸⁷

The oldest of three children, Butler—37 in 1969—was born and raised in L.A., graduated from Jefferson High School and attended L.A. City College. He attended Leimert Beauty School from 1962 to 1963 and owned and operated a beauty salon at 4520 West Adams, before leapfrogging to the sheriff's detachments.¹⁸⁸ He was described as "high yellow with big lips, chunky body, greasy hair." He was accused in the death of party cadre Captain Franco. He sang like a canary in courtrooms, telling the FBI that ji Jaga owned a machine gun, silver steel in color, and that the BPP possessed a rocket launcher and Cleaver had a fifty-caliber machine gun mounted on a truck.¹⁸⁹ Long John Washington went as far as asserting that Butler had CIA ties.¹⁹⁰ Butler was not the only crisis endured by ji Jaga. It was in 1971 that Saundra Pratt, his spouse then eight months pregnant, was killed, and though this inflamed tensions initially, as it was felt it was tied to the internal party schism,¹⁹¹ ultimately it was thought that organized crime elements were the culprit.¹⁹²

UCLA: "When Pratt was pointing the gun in his direction and ordering him to slap Ollie Taylor, Pratt had an erection."

186. In the Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles, Case #A267020, Habeas, 1996, Box 7. See *The Black Panther*, 8 August 1970: The authorities bore sharp animus toward ji Jaga, possibly because he was seen as a key to the underground and as a trainer of combative militants. "For over a year and a half...ji Jaga [was] repeatedly stopped on the street day and night and harassed at gunpoint." See *The Black Panther*, 29 August 1970: "After returning from Vietnam a seasoned veteran and holder of 13 medals," ji Jaga encountered a nightmare: "Murdering, arresting and harassing Panthers became an everyday, all day, pastime for the L.A. pig department."

187. FBI on Julio Butler, ca. 1969, Box 12, David Bernstein Papers-UCLA. See also Pratt v. Sumner, Court of Appeal of California, Second Appellate District, ca. 1986, Box 83, Coalition Against Police Abuse Papers, Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research, Los Angeles (abbrev. Coalition Against Police Abuse Papers).

188. People v. Julius Butler, 29 October 1969, Reel 10, Black Panther Documents.

189. Olsen, *Last Man Standing*, 53, 400.

190. Julio Butler, "To All Concerned Persons," 10 August 1969, Reel 10, Black Panther Documents. On Butler as a snitch, see Leaflet, n.d., Box 88, Coalition Against Police Abuse Papers. See also Olsen, *Last Man Standing*, 129: Butler accused in death of Franco.

191. *Los Angeles Times*, 13 November 1971. See also cartoon, ca. 1971, Reel 13, Black Panther Documents: "Here lies Huey Newton—killer of Saundra Pratt...may he rot in hell." Cf. *The Black Panther*, 20 November 1971: "So-called 'Newton faction'" of the party "implicated in the murder...bizarre and barbaric."

192. Olsen, *Last Man Standing*, 94, 58: The author reports that she was "gang raped at thirteen, became a hooker herself" and "became a 'stud broad,'" hence the reputed tie to organized crime.

The *Los Angeles Free Press* contended that she was a "top functionary in the Cleaver wing" of the party,¹⁹³ while the *Sentinel*, which used her nickname "Red," characterized her as a member of the "Afro-American Liberation Army."¹⁹⁴ Predictably, the *Herald-Dispatch* portrayed her as a "torture victim" of the "Panthers," meaning Cleaver's ideological internal foes. Only 24, she was found with five gunshot wounds, clad only in a t-shirt and stuffed into a sleeping bag. She was found by a streetcleaner on Fernwood Avenue in Lynwood near Imperial Highway.¹⁹⁵ However, when she was funeralized in November 1971 amongst a crowd of 100 at the First A.M.E. Church, an observer asked if she was "murdered by police agents."¹⁹⁶ Certainly, as one study put it, "no chapter or branch suffered more casualties than did the Los Angeles Panthers," and the tragic denouement of "Red" Pratt substantiated this thesis.¹⁹⁷

193. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 31 December 1971.

194. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 18 November 1971. She was also characterized as "Queen of the Lumpen": "Humanity...Freedom...Peace," n.d., published by Revolutionary Peoples Communication Network, BLA-Vertical File. At the same site and collection, see undated "Writ no. 1" by "we the members of the Walter 'Touré' Pope political cadre of the Afro-American Liberation Army."

195. *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 18 November 1971. *The Black Panther*, 20 November 1971: She was "brutally murdered by L.A. police...found in the morgue.... why does it take one week to identify the body...eight months pregnant...found in Lynwood...so-called 'Newton faction' of the Black Panther Party was implicated in the murder...bizarre and barbaric murder."

196. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 26 November 1971.

197. Jeffries and Foley, "To Live and Die in L.A.," 286.

Chapter 15

"Free Angela!" 1968-1972

Dorothy Healey was clear. The 1972 acquittal of the young Black Communist Angela Davis was monumental. It was the "biggest party initiated movement of the entire decade," possibly since the ill-fated Smith Act trials of the early 1950s and as substantial as the Scottsboro campaign of the 1930s. It had a "big effect on the party and brought in a number of young recruits," especially since "among Blacks there was overwhelming sympathy" for this compelling defendant. A residue of the Comintern, disbanded in the early 1940s, was the continued networking of Communist parties globally, meaning, she said, that "around the world" there were "launched campaigns on Angela's behalf," simultaneously discrediting to U.S. imperialism in the battle of ideas with socialism transcontinentally. However, she said critically, the "campaign in the United States was probably the most poorly organized" of all,¹ exposing a faultline that revealed itself more dramatically with the almost crippling exodus from the CP less than two decades later—including Professor Davis—in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union. Contemporaneously, Franklin Alexander informed "Dear Winnie"—CP chairman Henry Winston—that as of May 1971, there was a

1. Dorothy Healey and Maurice Isserman, *Dorothy Healey Remembers: A Life in the Communist Party*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1990, 220, 218. See also Dorothy Healey, Oral History: For six months "until her acquittal" she is working in the defense campaign, then in "dire straits...there was very little hot activity coming out of it...there were very great tensions and collisions between the personnel working within the Los Angeles office.... I spent practically full time working with the predominantly Black leadership of the Central Avenue office...I worked mainly with the Black youths...developing [an] office [that] would understand the techniques of organization.... generally, I then became again very much more aware...of the really very divided character of the national Angela Davis committee.... Black people...in their overwhelming numbers were very sympathetic and supportive...along with a great deal of support as far as the white liberal community was concerned. And yet this was the poorest- organized defense I had ever known...one could not get a national bulletin out...one did not have a constant supply of materials available to be distributed...they just couldn't get material out.... the mythology that this was a tremendously well organized mass campaign was just a lot of nonsense" though "great sums of money...could be raised." Still, "because of Angela many young Black people joined the party." In short, like the preceding anti-Jim Crow movement, the effort to rescue Professor Davis was successful largely due to an upsurge from Black Americans in concert with—as shall be seen—the international community.

"weakness of organization around the Bay Area,"² which should have been the locomotive.

Bettina Aptheker, who also eventually left the CP, à la Healey, as of January 1971 was staggered by the "breadth of support for Davis (and its spontaneous element) in the U.S."—perhaps here inferentially agreeing with the notion that there was an organizing deficit on these shores. But she too agreed that the support "throughout the world" and nationally was "without precedent for a political prisoner in the U.S. in recent history."³ The "mass movement had unprecedented global strength," said a concurring Davis.⁴ When Davis received bail in the midst of her October 1970-June 1972 ordeal, the judge received 20 times more letters in June 1971 when he rejected bail than in February 1972 when he granted it.⁵ Louise Thompson Patterson, with experience in mass movements stretching back decades, felt that "Angela Davis has stirred an international movement unlike any we've seen."⁶ When Davis's sister, Fania Davis Jordan, was unable to find seating in the courtroom, Attorney Branton in wonder responded that there had been "more requests for press seats and credentials to this trial than perhaps any other case in American history."⁷

Said another observer, weeks later, the defendant "appears to have captured the better part of the minds of Italy."⁸ According to Jane Fonda, by the Spring of 1971 U.S. soldiers in Indochina were signing over their life insurance policies to Davis's defense committee.⁹ The CP leadership of Gus Hall and Henry Winston, a few months later, argued that "there is not an area of the world in which the cry of 'Free Angela' has not been heard."¹⁰ Communist counsel John Abt asserted that the campaign to free her represented the "greatest outpouring of national and international public opinion ever organized for any U.S. political prisoner."¹¹

Agreeing from the opposite shore was conservative columnist Roscoe Drummond, who termed the defendant as the "most valuable instrument" of the

2. Franklin Alexander to "Dear Winnie," 25 May 1971, Angela Davis File, Niebyl-Procter Library, Oakland (abbrev. Angela Davis File-NPL). See also Minutes of Davis Defense Committee, 18 November 1971, Box 43, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard: A "comprehensive report" by William Patterson sketched "organizational problems."

3. *People's World*, 23 January 1971. See also R.S. and Maria Branch to editors of *Nommo*, UCLA student newspaper, n.d., Box 8, Robert Singleton Papers: "Angela's short presence at UCLA like the deaths of Bunchy [Carter] and John [Huggins] has accomplished an irreversible change among most of the Black people here."

4. Davis, *Autobiography*, 314.

5. Charles Rashman, *The People v. Angela Davis*, New York: Pinnacle, 1972, 33.

6. Quoted in Walt Thompson, "What's Left of the Black Left," n.d., Reel 14, Black Panther Documents.

7. Transcript, 31 January 1972, Reel 7, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

8. *People's World*, 20 February 1971.

9. *People's World*, 8 May 1971.

10. *People's World*, 24 July 1971.

11. Abt, *Advocate and Activist*, 281.

CP, which "had nothing like her before."¹² The *Detroit News* concurred: "For a sagging Communist Party a big boost from a new 'superstar'" was their headline in October 1971. There were "102 coast to coast defense offices," marveled the reporter, as "hardly a newspaper in the country hasn't run an account of Angela [Davis]."¹³ The gravity of the case—the defendant was facing three death sentences and a life sentence on three counts¹⁴—and the charisma of the professorial Davis were bound to attract maximum attention.

The skein of events that led her into a courtroom occurred dramatically on 7 August 1970 when the teenage Jonathan Jackson, brother of prisoner George Jackson—with whom Davis had become quite close—entered a courtroom north of San Francisco. He was armed and departed with young Black men whose cases were then being litigated, along with jurors and the judge. They entered a van and as they sought to leave, they were fired upon by the authorities, leaving Jackson and two of his confederates dead, along with the judge. The weapons used by Jackson were tied to Davis, leading to an attempt to detain her, her subsequent flight—then arrest and detention and trial.¹⁵

However, during the few months that she was on the lam, the authorities, in a typical crude manner, began rounding up Black women willy-nilly on the shaky grounds that they thought these unfortunates were actually Davis, serving to radicalize some who theretofore had no contact of this sort with the authorities. Subsequently, Davis recounted that "perhaps even thousands of Afro-wearing Black women were accosted, harassed and arrested by police, FBI and Immigration agents during the two months I spent underground," roughly from August to mid-October 1970.¹⁶ As Bettina Aptheker put it, "Young women, especially if they happened to be light complected and happened to wear their hair in an Afro style, were most vulnerable to the dragnet. Literally hundreds were detained, searched and questioned." A few weeks after 7 August cops surrounded the home of Davis's closest comrades, Franklin and Kendra Alexander, and sealed

112. Column, 21 June 1972, Box 43, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

113. *Detroit News*, 31 October 1971, Box 56, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

114. Transcript, 21 July 1971, Reel 3, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

115. There have been multiple rationales put forth to explain this electrifying event, some of which will be rehearsed below. For the time being, see Churchill and VanderWall, *Agents of Repression*, 97: The idea was to take hostages in Marin County to exchange for prisoners and then fly to Algeria but, they say, an initiator—Melvin "Cotton" Smith, a prosecution witness in the L.A. Panther trial—had briefed the authorities, leading to a presumed cancellation of the plot. But Jonathan Jackson apparently was not apprised. As noted below, Magee said the idea was to take hostages, repair to a radio station, then make a statement about horrendous prison conditions. See also Pearlman, *Call Me Phaedra*, 214: The original plan, reported here, was for Ji Jaga to bring a bevy of L.A. Panthers to bolster this ill-fated initiative but, it was said, Newton vetoed this maneuver. The message, however, apparently was not absorbed altogether by the younger Jackson and others. Cf. Ouagadougou, *Black Guerrilla Family*, 1887: Here James McClain, a prisoner who participated in the 7 August manifestation, is quoted as announcing on that fateful day, "We're going to the airport to take a plane."

116. Remarks by Davis, ca. 1990s, Box 18, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

off the street as if December 1969 was due for a replay. Healey's admonition notwithstanding, Aptheker was more upbeat about the mass organizing, counting 200 local committees in the U.S. and 67 abroad, with such an effort hardly seen since the 1930s—if then. These 67 units were in Europe, Africa, Asia, Latin America and Oceania, suggesting a jolt of adrenalin injected into the bloodstream of radicalism worldwide.¹⁷

Judge Richard E. Arnason, who presided over the trial, was taken with the overwhelming press coverage, magnifying and bulwarking the mass organizing. There were "435 or 437 certified sources of news" clustered near the courtroom that was moved dozens of miles south of Marin County in San Jose. Still sounding stunned by it all decades later, he stressed that "Many of them were foreign." His interviewer expressed "surprise" that this "country judge" was chosen to preside, apparently the doings of the state's chief justice. Then the interviewer, Marie Meeker, touched on the nub of the case, that likely helped to sink the prosecution which formulated this *démarche*: Davis's motive was constructed as being passion—her love for George Jackson and desire to free him—rather than politics, solidarity with a comrade behind bars as evidenced in the countless hours she spent toiling on behalf of a committee in his defense. Said the judge thoughtfully, "In retrospect, that was probably a really poor decision on the part of the prosecutor."¹⁸ The defendant recalled during her opening statement in the courtroom, "As I spoke about the male supremacist character of [the prosecution's] case, heads nodded on the jury."¹⁹ Such misjudgments led juror Mary Timothy to conclude that "if I ever wanted to lead a life of crime, I would head for Marin County," as their bumbling would foreclose conviction²⁰—though she could have broadened her lens to encompass Northern California. It did seem that at certain times prosecutor Albert Harris was overwhelmed. "We have a vast number of items that have been marked for identification," he said mid-trial, "to the point that it's very difficult to keep track of them."²¹ His *voir dire*—the

17. Bettina Aptheker, *The Morning Breaks: The Trial of Angela Davis*, New York: International, 1973, 23, 29. See Aptheker interview with Davis: *People's World*, 25 October 1969. See Report by Charles Mitchell, March 1971, Box 65, CPUSA Records-NYU: There were 200 Davis committees "including in the South...and in many places where we have not seen activity of any kind in a long period of time...more than 600 Black workers on the Ford assembly line at Mahwah, New Jersey wear a [Angela] button"; also, there was a high level of activism on this front among high school students. At that point there were 80 bags of mail awaiting the defendant to be opened, mostly from abroad. And of course, support among African Americans was exceedingly high. See Transcript, 22 July 1971, Reel 3, Angela Davis Case Collection CSU-Sacramento: There were then "50 chapters of the Committee to Free [Davis]."

18. Richard Arnason, Oral History, 2008, UCB.

19. Davis, *Autobiography*, 317.

20. Mary Timothy, *Jury Woman: The Story of the Trial of Angela Y. Davis*, San Francisco: GLP, 1975, 113.

21. Statement of Albert Harris, 13 April 1972, Reel 10, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

questioning of potential jurors—was “not nearly as extensive as that by the defense,” said Timothy.²²

Davis had her own problems. A critical issue was a yellow van in which Jackson, his comrades and captives were seeking to escape. Eyewitness identifications placed the defendant alongside him in the van just before 7 August. (Adept lawyering by Leo Branton helped to surmount this formidable hurdle. A principal juror was impressed with this “master showman who played to his audience the jury” with the “voice and movements of an experienced actor.”²³ He did dabble in theater, producing James Baldwin’s *Amen Corner*,²⁴ and during the trial made an offhand reference to a “Broadway play called *Promises, Promises*.)²⁵

But then there was a more vexatious political problem, more difficult to overcome. CP Chairman Winston instructed counsel Howard Moore that the “collective thinking...not just my own” of the party was that Davis being a Communist “precludes the possibility of her complicity in the events of San Rafael” of 7 August.²⁶ He did not share “differences...on the part of comrades Davis [and] Aptheker...in relation to the party’s view”²⁷—for the defendant was quite unwilling to show daylight between her and Jackson, which could lead a juror to infer her complicity in the deaths. Attorney John Thome put it succinctly to the father of Jonathan and George Jackson: The academic “certainly has no intention of, in any way, besmirching Jon’s name,”²⁸ by characterizing 7 August as adventurist, for example. Indeed. Even behind bars she praised “the insurrection of August 7, 1970,” as “ruling circles” were “shaken to the very core.”²⁹

222. Timothy, *Jury Woman*, 24.

223. Timothy, *Jury Woman*, 155, 156.

224. Rashman, *The People v. Angela Davis*, 46.

225. Transcript, 3 May 1972, Reel 11, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

226. Henry Winston to Howard Moore, 11 November 1971, Angela Davis File-NPL. Nevertheless, longtime CP counsel John Abt, in arguing against Davis’s extradition from New York to California, accused his opposite number “of acting like he’s trying a fugitive slave case before the Civil War,” gravitating toward his client’s view: Remarks by Abt, ca. December 1970, Reel 1, Davis Case Collection. Cf. Abt, *Advocate and Activist*, 274: Abt here resists the Davis idea that she was akin to a “runaway slave.” How to reconcile? The spontaneity of courtroom repartee can cause comments that can be at odds with the overall political line, but more than this, this illustrates the difficulty that many Communists had with 7 August. Cf. Angela Davis to Aptheker, 7 January 1971, Box 50, Bettina Aptheker Papers: UCLA colleagues were reluctant to support her until she “demonstrated my non-involvement in the SR [San Rafael] incident.”

227. CP Political Committee Discussion, 7 September 1971, Angela Davis File-NPL. “It may have been at this juncture that Professor Davis sent me [Dorothy Healey] a message while she was in San Rafael jail, asked me to come up to see her because she wanted to leave the party and whom I convinced that she had to remain—she couldn’t leave in the middle of the case,” Dorothy Healey, Oral History.

228. John Thome to Lester Jackson, 14 January 1971, Box 101, Thome Papers. In Pearlman, *Call Me Phaedra*, 168, Thome is characterized as a “committed Marxist.”

229. *The Black Panther*, 22 May 1971.

At a Fall 1971 meeting of Communists, the comrades wrestled with this matter: If San Rafael was seen as growing from a mass movement—a credible assertion—would it be reasonable for a jury to infer that the defendant was more than a tacit participant? If it did not arise from a mass movement, did that suggest it was adventurist? How was it possible to disassociate the defendant from 7 August without besmirching the late Jonathan Jackson was a real question.³⁰

On the other side of the coin, Professor Davis strived to maintain comradely relations with her co-defendant Ruchell Magee, a prisoner in the courtroom who joined Jonathan Jackson on that fateful day. As shall be seen, he pursued a legal strategy at odds with hers—seeking removal of the case to federal court because of profound distrust based on experience of state courts; moreover, as Aptheker suggested, the jointness of their defense was problematic because of the “positive assertion of your innocence.”³¹

The prosecutor had not considered sufficiently the emergent anti-sexism movement that found the approach he mounted as denigrating to a defendant like Davis—who, as shall be seen, likely triumphed in the case from its inception when she won the right to provide an opening statement in court that humanized her and presented her as poised and modern and unlikely to be driven to risk execution because of passion. Mary Timothy, a key juror, stressed the importance of this statement: “We were given a chance to discover her as a fellow human being” and not just a symbol of “Black Militant Communism.”³² Moreover, boldly and frontally, Davis sought to confront what many comrades had sought to evade. In the courtroom, she audaciously declaimed, “I am a member of the Communist Party” and favored the “revolutionary struggle to overthrow the conditions of a capitalist oppression and to bring about a new and a more human socialist order.”³³ To a degree this defused the anticommunist option and probably left the prosecution with the sexism option. In a heated exchange during the trial, Davis’s counsel, Howard Moore—who had victoriously defended his brother-in-law, future NAACP Chairman Julian Bond, before the U.S. Supreme Court—also sought to take away the racist card by openly calling the prosecutor a “Distorted bigot,” and he replied meekly, “We have cut out all references to the Communist Party” from the offered evidence but leaving intact what amounted to sexism.³⁴ But with the rise of an anti-sexist movement, this tool became less effective too.

30. Minutes of 28 October 1971, as of 4 November 1971, Angela Davis File-NPL. See Remarks by Aptheker at rally in San Antonio Park-Oakland, 24 October 1970, Series 2, Box 41, Newton Foundation: 7 August had been misread by “many white radicals” in that the younger Jackson’s démarche “transcends its immediate goals, just as John Brown’s raid on Harper’s Ferry in 1859 transcended its immediate objectives” meaning that both Brown and Frederick Douglass were correct—though the latter opposed the raid. She too sought to tie 7 August to the “mass movement.”

31. Bettina Aptheker to Davis, 23 January 1971, Box 56, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

32. Timothy, *Jury Woman*, 95.

33. Transcript, 21 July 1971, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

34. Transcript, 27 April 1972, Reel 11, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

Nevertheless, a problem for the mass movement and the courtroom defense was a dearth of unanimity as to the efficacy of the events of 7 August. Henry Winston, CP chairman who happened to be Black, as early as 1971, was critical publicly of Jonathan Jackson, the teenager who lost his life that day, limning his "futile self sacrifice," his "self defeating...desperation," and the "anti-Marxist, adventurist policies" of the Panthers, thought to have inspired him, which "isolated" him and his comrades "from the people." Instead of comparing him favorably to the "deeds of Nat Turner and John Brown," Winston instead associated them with the less heroized "Socialist Revolutionaries" in 1902 Russia. Yes, "revolutionaries must certainly honor the memory of Jonathan," he conceded, but not necessarily walk in his footsteps.³⁵ Davis disagreed, telling Dr. King's successor, the Reverend Ralph David Abernathy—a supporter—of the "heroic efforts" involved in the "San Rafael Revolt" which was analogous to a "Slave Rebellion."³⁶

The wider problem was that the obvious errors of the Panthers—allying with Maoists as China allied with Washington; picking up the gun without a concrete analysis of the objective conditions and not securing a necessary rear base in Cuba—obscured the point that the BPP had struck a chord that could not be evaded. As Roscoe Procter, the burly stevedore and respected Communist, once enunciated, what helped to motivate the Panthers, including their ill-fated reliance on the lumpen, was widespread lack of confidence in the mettle of broad sectors of the Euro-American working class, spawning what many Communists considered to be unacceptable shortcuts to victory: witness 7 August. As long as that was unperceived and unaddressed, it was unavoidable that a Jonathan Jackson would arise and that some Communists would flock to his banner—and that could then underlay the later 1991-style splits. And until the nettle of class collaboration inhering in settler societies grounded in enslavement of Africans was grasped, another San Rafael would recur eventually.³⁷

* * *

35. Henry Winston, "The Meaning of San Rafael," 1971, Box 1, Angela Davis Collection-Clairemont.

36. Davis to the Reverend Abernathy, ca. 12 August 1971, Box 153, CPUSA Records-NYU. Her codefendant, Ruchell Magee, agreed in court: "I said August 7th was a Slave Rebellion." Transcript, 19. July 1971, Reel 2, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS. Cf. Ouagadougou, *Black Guerrilla Family*, 198: James Carr, a longtime comrade of George Jackson, "built an underground guerrilla training facility in...[the] Santa Cruz mountains."

37. See the piece by the respected British Communist William Pomeroy, who fought alongside the heroic Huks in the Philippines and wrote cogently about apartheid, *Labour Monthly*, November 1971, Box 34, Bettina Aptheker Papers: He writes that Davis backed the BPP lumpen thesis and he concurred with the "Revolutionary potential" of this stratum. Cf. piece in the same box by Victor Grossman, U.S. Communist exiled in East Germany in the African National Congress journal *Sechaba*, vol. 6, no. 5, ca. 1971.

Born in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1944, Angela Davis recalled that "among the most vivid of my earliest childhood memories are the deafening sounds of dynamite exploding"³⁸ as a result of racist terrorism that afflicted this heart of darkness. Her classmate at Brandeis, Louis Asekoff, recalled that "she spoke of knowing the families and the girls who died in [the] Birmingham church bombing" of 1963, a landmark in the anti-Jim Crow movement. "[T]hat evidently effected her quite deeply," he said. Thus, her family "had guns around the house...loaded and ready for use if necessary." This was traumatizing violence for any, but particularly for a young Black American: "she would speak of lying in her room at night and being apprehensive for no particular reason." One of her brothers would examine the grounds of their home, "just looking to see if anyone had planted a bomb." The youthful Davis "spoke of living on Dynamite Hill," the grotesque moniker for her neighborhood.³⁹ Her sister Fania later said that "my closest friend was Cynthia Wesley," a prime victim of the September 1963 bombing, "but all of them" were her "friends." The sisters, both of whom became fluent in French, may have noticed that leading Parisians, like Jean-Paul Sartre and Jean Genet, both denounced this outrage, as did many others globally.⁴⁰

Davis's attorney during this epochal trial, Leo Branton—counsel during the Smith Act trials of the early 1950s and the Panther case in L.A.—spoke of the "fears which all Black people in Birmingham had concerning racist violence," with "homes being burned out" and "bombed." This meant "guns were a way of life with Black people in Birmingham," as "her father always [had] several guns in the house, a shotgun, a rifle and several pistols."⁴¹ Branton, a graduate of the law school at Northwestern University, had spent the tumultuous years of 1962-1964 in Dixie as the anti-Jim Crow movement was heating up. His experience there and working alongside Charles Garry in the Communist-led case of Wesley Robert Wells, provided him with the depth to star in the Davis case. Other than the mass movement, his courtroom legerdemain was largely responsible for her freedom.⁴²

But Birmingham was also a center of resistance,⁴³ especially during the Scottsboro years and thereafter, when the Communist couples, James Jackson and

38. Typescript, 14 September 1971, Box 44, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard. See also *The Black Panther*, 18 September 1971.

39. Interview with Louis Asekoff, April 1972, Box 45, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard. Cf. Louis Asekoff to Doris Walker, 13 December 1971, Box 48, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

40. *People's World*, 14 November 1970.

41. Leo Branton interviews Madelyn Coar, childhood friend of Davis, 20 April 1971, Box 45, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

42. Release, 12 January 1972, Box 5, Angela Davis Legal Defense Collection. Also, Dorothy Healey, Oral History: "There is no question that Leo's handling of Angela's trial was, I think, a major factor in her subsequent acquittal."

43. Home, *Communist Front?* See also Mamesba Tackett, Oral History, March-April 1984, UCLA. Youth felt that in light of violence in Birmingham, "You ought to strike back," which led to the popularity of Karenga's classes in martial arts; simultaneously McCarthyism "frightened" Negroes.

Esther Cooper Jackson and Louis and Dorothy Burnham, settled there by the late 1940s and befriended Davis's parents. "The Davis[es] 'closest friends in Birmingham," said Gregory Armstrong, author of a controversial book about George Jackson, "were a Black Communist couple, Louis and Dorothy Burnham."⁴⁴ Davis's co-counsel in her trial was their daughter, Margaret Burnham, a "very old friend," said Davis, in that "her family and mine" had lived in the same housing project in Birmingham. Davis said that her schoolteacher mother had worked on the pathbreaking Scottsboro case⁴⁵ and was a "leading member" of the Southern Negro Youth Congress, a precursor of SNCC—the latter to which Davis later belonged—and allied with the heroic Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth in Birmingham. "My mother was always active in this group," she said. After the bombing of the church "the men...organized themselves into nightly armed patrols" in which her "father participated."⁴⁶ Her father, says Davis, "controlled a filling station."⁴⁷ Or as Davis's probation agent told the judge in mid-1971, "her father operates a service station and parts store in Birmingham. Her mother has been an elementary school teacher."⁴⁸

These connections led her by 1959 to spend an academic term in New York City, residing at the home of the progressive cleric, the Reverend William Howard Melish. He and his family resided in Brooklyn at St. Mark's and Kingston, he said, the "dividing line between Bedford-Stuyvesant and...Crown Heights," later a byword for Black-Jewish tensions.⁴⁹ She attended the progressive Elizabeth Irwin High School (affiliated with the Little Red Schoolhouse, founded in 1921) and was no stranger to the big city. Her family and the Burnhams were "very close friends" and she had resided with them—after they departed Alabama—beginning with her "first trip to New York...at the age of six and alone, more or less." Still, her secondary school experience marked her in that there were "teachers in jeans and bear[d]s; beatniks" in the argot of the day. "Call teachers by their first name"

leading to a contrasting reaction. Cf. Robert Fikes, "The Black in Crimson and Black: A History and Profiles of African-Americans at San Diego State University," 2004, San Diego History Center. Karenga speaks on campus in September 1967 "surrounded by five intimidating bodyguards."

⁴⁴4. Transcript from Gregory Armstrong, 1972, Box 46, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

⁴⁵45. Davis, *Autobiography*, 69.

⁴⁶46. Davis to "Dearest Dearmon and Sonja," 29 November 1971, Box 48, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard: This recollection sheds light on the debate noted in the Introduction about the roots of the Black Liberation Army. As with the origins of the movement we call "Jazz," it is likely there were multiple roots, a kind of "candelabra" story in other words. See Gerald Home, *Jazz and Justice: Racism and the Political Economy of the Music*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 2019. Cf. Ouagadougou, *Black Guerrilla Family*.

⁴⁷47. Davis, *Autobiography*, 72.

⁴⁸48. James Soetaert, Chief Deputy Probation Officer to Judge Amason, 15 June 1971, Reel 7, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS. See also Davis letter, unclear date, Reel 11. "My aunt, descendant of slaves...now lives in a twenty room mansion in the hills of Hollywood. Before she disassociated herself from me, I was 17."

⁴⁹49. Undated Remarks by Reverend William Howard Melish, Box 45, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

was normative. And though her mother was "very religious," she "had begun to attend meetings of" a CP-oriented "Marxist youth organization" known as "Advance." Also participating were Bettina Aptheker, daughter of the Communist historian, and Mary Lou Patterson, daughter of William and Louise Thompson Patterson. In New York City, she "always marched...against the bomb, against racism" and was "part of a group that picketed Woolworth's," the retail chain store, "every Saturday."⁵⁰

Melish, who voted for Socialist Party icon Norman Thomas prior to 1956, also had pacifist tendencies, being reluctant to fight during World War II.⁵¹ "Ironically," said Melish "Angela met the leadership of the Birmingham Civil Rights Movement in my home in Brooklyn." It was Melish who preached at Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s funeral in Ghana in 1963 and knew him "well," he admitted.⁵² It was also in 1963 that the student of French, then German, told "Dear Mother and Daddy...I learned quite a bit about navigation. I know how to plot a course, work the radar and I even steered the ship for a few minutes" en route to Rotterdam.⁵³

During 1963 she studied at the Sorbonne in Paris, just before graduating Magna Cum Laude in French literature from Brandeis. From 1965 to 1967 she matriculated at Goethe University in Frankfurt, then headed to La Jolla to study with Herbert Marcuse.⁵⁴ Her project, he said, was "The Concept of Force in German Idealistic Philosophy (in particular Kant)."⁵⁵

While in Paris, in a year away from her studies at Brandeis, Davis encountered members of the Algerian underground and began to ask questions leading to deeper understanding of imperialism, colonialism and racism.⁵⁶ The Reverend Melish recalled that "French police were watching all Black people and Angela witnessed what surveillance means."⁵⁷ Davis recalled, "to be an Algerian living in Paris in 1962 was to be hunted."⁵⁸

There were about 10 Black students at Brandeis out of a student body of 1500 but, serendipitously, it was there that she encountered the famed philosopher Herbert Marcuse, who was soon recruited to the University of California-San Diego.⁵⁹

50. Davis to "Dearest Dearmon and Sonja," 29 November 1971, Box 48, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

51. Doris Walker interview with the Reverend Melish, 14 December 1971, Box 46, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

52. Transcript from Gregory Armstrong, 1972, Box 46, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

53. Davis to "Dear Mother and Father," 13 July 1963, Box 13, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

54. Probation Report from James Soetaert, 15 June 1971, Reel 7, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

55. Marcuse Affidavit, 27 March 1971, Reel 1, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS: "I reside at 8331 [Cliffridge] Avenue" in La Jolla.

56. *People's World*, 20 March 1971.

57. Undated remarks by Reverend William Howard Melish, Box 45, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

58. Davis, *Autobiography*, 105.

59. Davis to "Dearest Dearmon and Sonja," 29 November 1971, Box 48, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

The German-born academic worked for U.S. intelligence during the antifascist war and had taught for 11 years at Brandeis before migrating to La Jolla in 1965, billed as “home to some of the most conservative and wealthy people” in the nation. “Leftist upsets staid La Jolla” was one apt descriptor of this tall, soft-spoken white-haired man. His writings attracted global attention as student demonstrators chanted alliteratively “Marx, Marcuse, Mao,” not endearing at the beachside campus. He was threatened by ultra-rightists and, said one analyst, “his wife became almost hysterically fearful for his life.”⁶⁰ Understandably, as

60. Clipping, 27 October 1968, Box 5, Robert Chandler Collection. The Southland, according to one study, “drew the largest number of white immigrants from Southern Africa after Australia,” with an unhealthy percentage winding up in San Diego County. This reinforced preexisting conservatism there, but dialectically the CORE chapter there was “among the most active chapters in the nation” and “led the state’s most successful campaign against the Bank of America.” Likewise, San Diego had the “fastest growing Black population of a major city in the North or the West between 1940 and 1970. San Diego’s Black population grew almost thirteen times during this period going from 4143 to 52,961.” Similarly, Spanish language courses were taught at “Africa House” by “Mexican American activist Julie Usquiano, an associate director” of this entity; “in the 1940s [she] and her husband Phillip as well as Lee and Beverly Major” were investigated for alleged Communist ties. See Matsemela-Odom, “From Southern California,” 9, 45, 104. More broadly, it is intriguing that the Golden State has contained migrants from Southern Africa—Elon Musk, Peter Thiel and Roelof Botha—who have risen to the apex of monopoly capitalism: Marco D’Eramo, “Capital’s Militant,” *New Left Review*, 26 April 2023. As for La Jolla, now at the pinnacle of affluence, less than a century ago it had a Black population second only to that of Logan Heights in San Diego; it also was redolent with anti-Jewish fervor then, a legacy of a significant Ku Klux Klan presence. The arrival of the university ironically led to a decline of the Black population and the increase in the Jewish population: Cristin McVey, “Traces of Black San Diego, 1890-1950,” Ph.D. dissertation, UCSD, 2004, 2, 5, 6, 52, 73, 85. See also Vertical File, “Jews,” San Diego History Center: Clipping, 16 November 1996? In the 1950s “Jewish residents were as rare as a badly dressed debutante” in La Jolla. In the same file, see also, undated, “Who was first Jew in Modern San Diego?...Indian Fighter [Louis] Rose arrived in 1850.” At the same site, see also Vertical File, “Associations-Black Pioneers,” “La Jolla...Black Pioneers and Pioneer Descendants, 1880-1974,” 2011. At the same site, see also Raymond Eugene Peters and Lady Nicole Perry, “Forgotten Renaissance: The Disappearance of African American History from San Diego Memory. A History Lost, Stolen, Hidden or Covertly Dismissed,” 2004: Southeast San Diego “including Logan Heights...prized most valuable land” in the county and “with malice aforethought [was] devalued and degraded.” Anticipating the arrival in the state of Musk, Botha and Thiel, the authors add that the self-described “finest city” in the nation was “well known as the ‘APARTHEID’ capital of America.” See also Patrick Germany, Oral History: This comrade calls San Diego “one of the most racist cities there is,” akin to Mississippi. *San Diego Evening Tribune*, 17 September 1971: Arson destroys the “National Afro-American Historical Society” sited in San Diego. See also Cynthia Hudgins, *The Other Side of the Fence: Life on Both Sides of the Color Line*, Littleton, Col.: Because, 2022: This poignant story depicts the intense racism faced by a pioneering Negro family in Coronado, an island adjacent to San Diego. See also *San Diego Tribune*, 15 August 1985, for a case of de facto slavery in Coronado, this time involving “four Central American women...maids.” Cf. Harold K. “Hal” Brown, *Fighting the Color Monster: My Struggle to Overcome Racism*, San Diego: Montezuma, 2019, 52, 61, 67, 89, 92-93, 108: During the 1960s in San Diego “the churches...were not speaking out against racial discrimination and segregation,” including Black churches. He led CORE then and this occurred “although our membership dues were only \$25 annually...our membership was usually around 50.” Attesting to the city’s conservatism, he adds, “When I graduated from college in 1959, I tried to join the San Diego branch of the NAACP” but found it was “on the bureaucratic equivalent of

campuses in Rome were shuttered in 1968, a banner read: "Marx as prophet, Marcuse as his interpreter and Mao as the sword."⁶¹

Yet for many U.S. Communists, Marcuse was no hero, and his being linked with Mao Zedong was hardly a recommendation as far as they were concerned. Si Gerson, who played a prominent role in CP circles at the Manhattan headquarters, was among those who assailed him, and this critique arrived at a sensitive moment,⁶² when Davis was on the lam and needed maximum support. These comrades were displeased with him though Marcuse made salient contributions to antifascism and anti-Nazism.⁶³ Moreover, when it was not easy to do so, Marcuse was praising socialist Cuba to the point where one was referred to his campus as "Marcuseland" and Davis as a kind of Prime Minister.⁶⁴ By August 1968, as Davis's last months in La Jolla were winding down, Chancellor McGill reported regretfully that the Marcuse "case continues to boil."⁶⁵

Weeks earlier, George Fischer, Commander of the American Legion in the vicinity, was anxious about the supposed arrival in town of German radical—and presumed Marcuse recruit—Rudi Dutschke, suggesting that La Jolla was becoming a magnet attracting subversives from overseas.⁶⁶

As noted, a number of comrades were unhappy with the events of 7 August 1970, seeing it not as the equivalent of a righteous slave revolt but more akin to ultra-left adventurism. This perception impacted CP-BPP ties at various points. Other comrades were dissatisfied by Marcuse's critiques of the late Soviet leader Stalin.⁶⁷ If comrades had been able to read internal UCSD correspondence, their ire would be further inflamed. Said one administrator of the German émigré, "He is not a Communist but calls himself a Marxist...his writings are barred behind the Iron Curtain. In many respects he is as much opposed to Communism as practiced behind the Iron Curtain as you are," speaking to a fellow conservative.⁶⁸ The godfather of Neo-Conservatism, Irving Kristol, as well, was no fan of "the improbable guru of surrealistic politics...he writes in an abstract and austere

life support." Yet even Brown was wary of accepting aid from the CP though "our meetings became extremely turbulent" and this group too lurched toward moribundity. Thus, Brown "was unable to get the San Diego branch of the NAACP, the San Diego Urban League or the black churches to join in the fight to remove the obstacles that prevented black men and women and black children from participating as full and equal citizens.... I was accustomed to having many black professionals in San Diego treat me as a pariah."

61. *Daily Californian*, 6 October 1970, Box 249, Chancellor Subject Files.

62. *People's World*, 22 August 1970.

63. Franz Neumann, et al., eds., *Secret Reports on Nazi Germany: The Frankfurt School Contribution to the War Effort*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013. Cf. W. Mark Cobb, et al., eds., *Herbert Marcuse: A Critical Reader*, New York: Routledge, 2004.

64. Letter from John Feared of El Cajon, 12 August 1969, Box 246, Chancellor Subject Files.

65. McGill to John Galbraith, 26 August 1968, Box 249, Chancellor Subject Files.

66. George Fischer to Chancellor Galbraith, 3 July 1968, Box 248, Chancellor Subject Files.

67. Interview with Marcuse on Channel 8, 25 February 1969, Box 249, Chancellor Subject Files.

68. Philip James to Dale Watson, 26 October 1970, Box 249, Chancellor Subject Files.

Teutonic style," yet he was the "idol of revolutionary students all over the world" and somehow was the "intellectual counterpart of Che [Guevara]." He sniffed and wrinkled his nose at his "only significant scholarly work"—damning it with faint praise—speaking of *Reason and Revolution*, which was a "valuable contribution at the time," especially for one who was both a "Marxist and a Hegelian." The concept of "repressive tolerance," his descriptor for bourgeois society, made his name and rescued the "New Left" from "muddle," but like a good deal of his work, it was little more than "sheer sophistry."⁶⁹

It wasn't just his mentoring of Davis that brought obloquy to him. Anthony Floyd Dumas, a San Diego Panther, was granted a hefty \$750 by Marcuse for the breakfast program—but then he was accused of four armed robberies and, once more, the philosopher was vituperated.⁷⁰

As a result of this animus toward him, Marcuse found himself objecting to various rightward leanings on campus. He objected vehemently to "university sponsorship of Dr. Fred Schwarz," the hyperbolic anticommunist, to teach a course, though his purpose clearly was "to attack me." Yes, administration acted "under pressure," but by whom was his inquiry?⁷¹

Marcuse was born to an elite Jewish family in Berlin in 1898. Besides philosophizing, he was devoted to music, hiking and parties—besides being a lifetime member of the famed San Diego Zoo.⁷² However, these latter pursuits were rarely, if ever, raised during his stay in the Southland; instead, he was pilloried for his presumed role in supposedly creating the dangerous Davis.

His antifascism seemed to be upsetting to some, a characteristic that extended to his then spouse, Inge Marcuse. Writing from her comfortable La Jolla residence at 8831 Cliffridge Avenue, she recalled in 1966 how she had spent "three years...studying authoritarianism at Columbia...doing research on fascist and semi-fascist groups in France for the OSS [Office of Strategic Services of U.S.]." She was a Jewish refugee from Germany "whose family was eliminated by the Nazis." She and her spouse were unwilling, thusly, to flee in the face of opposition; as she added: "Nothing encourages fascist organizations as much as ignorance and

⁶⁹ *Fortune*, July 1969, Box 249, Chancellor Subject Files.

⁷⁰ *San Diego Union*, 19 September 1970, Box 249, Chancellor Subject Files. Black San Diego had a glorious tradition to uphold, including the legacy of Rev. George W. Woodbey, denoted by Marxist historian Philip S. Foner as an "Early Twentieth Century Black Socialist." Another referred to him as "The Great Negro Socialist Orator" who gained "international renown"; curiously, this "tall, thin, dark skinned" man disappeared in 1915. See Philip S. Foner, "Reverend George Washington Woodbey: Early Twentieth Century Black Socialist," *Journal of Negro History*, 61 (No. 2, 1976): 136-157; and *Voice News & Viewpoint*, 14 February 1979, both in Vertical File, "African-Americans," San Diego History Center.

⁷¹ Article by Marcus in *Triton Times*, 13 March ca. 1970. Box 249, Chancellor Subject Files.

⁷² *TIME*, 13 August 1979, Box 25, William McGill Papers.

indifference disguised as tolerance." She was miffed that the local campus bookstore carried John Birch Society literature—not so in Berkeley.⁷³

The La Jolla campus had only been established in 1959, and Marcuse's arrival shortly thereafter as a kind of revolutionary Pied Piper for students was unnerving to some. When his appointment was being considered, Gov. Reagan—"no benign nice guy in those days," said Chancellor McGill—"was operating under a full head of steam against the appointment,"⁷⁴ that Marcuse's global reputation overcame. The American Legion offered to pay his \$20,000 salary if he would just leave town. The Progressive Labor Party denounced him as a "CIA agent"—but so did *Pravda*, the Soviet journal, gossip columnist Walter Winchell, and court historian, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. The combination of Marcuse and the area's role as anchor of the Military-Industrial Complex was akin to oil and matches. Nor did the area's heritage of anti-Jewish fervor combine well with this intellectual. Rightists were also displeased by the presence of Linus Pauling, though he was one of the most popular professors on campus. Administrators should have been pleased with Marcuse's advice to radical students: He reminded them that V.I. Lenin reputedly read Hegel three times: "You must read first,"⁷⁵ he insisted.

If Marcuse were reading local publications, he may have wanted to accept the offer to leave town. Dubbing him as the "Philosopher of Violence" was one of the milder assertions⁷⁶—though a local pol dubbing him as a "combination of Santa Claus and Maurice Chevalier," debonair French actor, was symptomatic of the depths to which his antagonists were driven.⁷⁷

Marcuse was wildly unpopular among conservatives who had elected one of their own—Ronald Reagan—as governor. The couple that identified themselves as Mr. and Mrs. E. J. Hunter were "extremely unhappy" with Marcuse's presence on campus.⁷⁸ Fellow faculty member W.R. Jack, of the renowned Scripps Institute of Oceanography, was even more upset. Faculty, he argued, "play a key roll [*sic*] in encouraging students to demonstrate and disrupt the educational process," and in the crosshairs was not just Marcuse but Linus Pauling, scientist and peace activist, both "greeted by screaming ovations" but who were little more than "troublemakers and political agitators."⁷⁹ An unnamed student echoed Jack's distress, asserting that such protests "made me mad" so that "[I] couldn't think at all for 24 hours...I feel hurt, stepped on, disturbed and angry...I can't concentrate."⁸⁰

73. Inge Marcuse to Avrum Stroll, 16 December 1966, Box 43, William McGill Papers.

74. William McGill to Craig Higgs, 16 December 1994, Box 9, William McGill Papers.

75. *Los Angeles Times*, 27 July 1969, Box 249, Chancellor Subject Files.

76. Newspaper tabloid, March 1970, Box 249, Chancellor Subject Files.

77. Press Release of Assemblyman John Stull, 30 August 1968, Box 249, Chancellor Subject Files.

78. Mr. and Mrs. E.J. Hunter to Chancellor McGill, 5 June 1969, Box 246, Chancellor Subject Files.

79. W.R. Jack to Chancellor McGill, 28 May 1969, Box 246, Chancellor Subject Files.

80. "A UCSD student" to Chancellor McGill, 18 October 1969, Box 246, Chancellor Subject Files.

By the spring of 1967, Davis was in Germany when UCSD offered her an "fellow assistant" for "life and study in La Jolla."⁸¹ Then she was offered a National Defense Education Act Fellowship with strings attached.⁸² It was around then that she informed "Dear Mommy and Daddy," writing on UCSD stationery, that "all the problems which I felt I had before esp. when I was seeing the analyst have all faded away.... I have been working closely with a number of white people," presumably Marcuse, and thus disagreed "that I have acquired a hatred or dislike for white people."⁸³ (This latter point was incongruent with a subsequent press account: "When I was 12, I helped organize interracial study groups in Birmingham but they were busted up by the police."⁸⁴)

Perhaps in her letter to her parents, she was referring to hearing Malcolm X lecture during her tenure at Brandeis. She was "immensely impressed," she said about his remarks at Boston University. But then she determined that the status of women in the Nation of Islam was "enough to turn me off." Back then she was "extremely impressed" with James Forman too, and felt similarly about his comrade Ralph "Che" Featherstone, among other political and intellectual influences.⁸⁵

In fact, she had become—as campus administrators came to acknowledge—a skilled organizer able to mobilize across multiple barriers. Along with Izzie Chavez, she was a co-founder of the Lumumba-Zapata movement that led to the formation of "Third College" at UCSD (later renamed for Thurgood Marshall).⁸⁶ "I did play a leading role" in this movement, she conceded.⁸⁷

That she did—and it was akin to being in the eye of the storm. Chancellor McGill was "present" at a L-Z meeting "carried on in an atmosphere of threat from minority students and white radical students," who "filled the halls outside voicing threats." It was all "quite dangerous because of the radical leadership"; yet their demand was a "very popular issue among the students" and thus he was "receiving a good deal more than the ordinary pressure from the minority community downtown." Yet with Gov. Reagan lurking over his shoulder, he reassured, "I did not take this job to see UCSD destroyed."⁸⁸

81. Professor Jason Saunders to Davis, 12 April 1967, Box 248, Chancellor Subject Files.

82. Professor Saunders to Davis, 2 May 1967, Box 248, Chancellor Subject Files.

83. Letter from Davis, ca. 1966-67, Box 13, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

84. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 3 September 1970.

85. Davis to "Dearest Dearmon and Sonja," 29 November 1971, Box 48, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

86. Bettina Aptheker to Doris Walker, 1 December 1971, Box 48, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

87. Davis to "Dearest Dearmon and Sonja," 29 November 1971, Box 48, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard. See also Minutes of Meetings, 25 April 1969, 2 May 1969, and 12 May 1969, all involving "Third College" with Davis present, and intermittently literary critic Frederic Jameson, Box 7, Joseph Gusfield Papers-UCSD. For more on this point, see Box 3, Jorge Mariscal Papers-UCSD.

88. Chancellor McGill to Assemblyman John Stull of Encinitas, 23 June 1969, Box 28, Chancellor Subject Files.

There were "dark clouds on the horizon," McGill lamented. Students made a demand "that we hire James Turner as Provost of Third College" or L-Z. When he "returned home from Los Angeles..., leaving behind the smashed windows and shouting mobs" at the "UCLA campus," he spotted the "curious welcome to [Daniel] Cohn-Bendit at L.A. airport," speaking of the notorious French radical. He knew that "campus radicals" were "on the phone with one another all over the [UC] system" planning to take a Marine recruiter "hostage" even as San Diego cops "infiltrated our SDS very effectively." He was pleased that at the meeting of his peers, "I had somehow managed to come down as the most hard-nosed of the chancellors," no easy task. He sought to arrange a televised debate featuring his taking on these "radicals," doubtlessly helpful for his upward mobility. For this would leave his antagonists "bleating angrily."⁸⁹

It was not just the former B-actor, then performing as governor. The couple that identified themselves as "Mr. and Mrs. D.W. Rice" of Gardena demanded that he "get some starch into your backbone and turn these troublemakers down...no more tax money for Black or Brown Studies."⁹⁰ Matters on campus were becoming frazzled. Teona Sidney of the rightist Young Americans for Freedom and her comrade, Arthur Sorkin of UCSD Students of Objectivism, were about to hold a capitalism v. socialism debate on campus when a professor told her that "if she did not change her political views she would be shot," as the left, she charged, were willing to "resort to force or the threat of force...to impose their will on others."⁹¹ Gene Gregston, managing editor of the conservative *San Diego Tribune*, was upset when his reporter was "forcibly ejected by 'students'" from a hotly contested meeting, while his "notebook" was "grabbed from his hands and partially destroyed."⁹²

Later Davis expressed "vivid recollections" of how she first became aware of the West Coast CP journal. "As a member of the UCSD Black Student Union, I was involved in organizing support for a Black GI" and found difficulty in getting publicity for this case, but then "found an impressive story in the *People's World*,"⁹³ of immeasurable value, paving her path to the CP.

In the overheated right-wing climate of San Diego, she also found other items to be of immeasurable value. It was during the winter of 1968 that Erica Sherover, who was to become Marcuse's third spouse, became "aware" for the "first time...that Angela possesses a gun." The graduate student arrived tardily to a Marcuse seminar, accidentally dropped her purse and "a small gun fell out."

89. McGill to John Galbraith, 7 August 1969, Box 249, Chancellor Subject Files.

90. Mr. and Mrs. D.W. Rice, 22 May 1969, Box 28, Chancellor Subject Files.

91. Teona Sidney and Arthur Sorkin, ca. 9 May 1969, Box 28, Chancellor Subject Files.

92. Gene Gregston to Chancellor McGill, 12 May 1970, Box 246, Chancellor Subject Files.

93. Davis to "Dear Friends," 27 August 1972, Box 12, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard. This campaign was likely on behalf of Black soldier Eddie Lynn (not Billy Dean Smith): Bettina Aptheker to Dennis Walker, 1 December 1971, Box 48, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

Student Ron Perrin covered it with his notebook and quipped, "You dropped something baby." By the time of the murders on the UCLA campus in January 1969, "conversations" with her led to Davis's admission of "fears for her own life."⁹⁴ Davis "for a while" was "fully armed at all times": this had quite a bit to do with the wildness of the Southland, with trigger-happy cops and internecine conflict within the movement. Thus, during this tempestuous era an alleged Panther pulled a gun on her in a conflict as to who could claim this exalted party name.⁹⁵ The other point adjacent to this classmate's anecdote is that she found herself "in awe" of the teacher of this seminar: Marcuse.⁹⁶

Marcuse's mentee also attracted negative attention—from Chancellor McGill himself. "I first saw Angela," he said, "when minority students presented their demands" about forming a Lumumba-Zapata college: "demands had been composed by Angela," he said with unnecessary familiarity and "Keith Lowe," a Black British national. There ensued "chaotic and sometimes frightening meetings," and "Angela was always there as the intellectual spearhead." She "led the group of 52 students as they broke into the Registrar's office" to enforce their demands. It was raucous (though students "agreed to pay for [a] smashed door") and McGill "saw a rifle being carried into the building." Already, there was high level cooperation in that his Chief of Police, Buck Torrens, told him that an agent of the local FBI office "was without any doubt a clandestine member" of a CP "group in Los Angeles," since the "FBI had infiltrated the group which was both elite and small." This was during her transition from graduate school to faculty at UCLA, and McGill "had been talking" to the latter's chancellor about her, unusual attention to be afforded junior faculty. He informed his peer that she was "a very hard customer and filled with hate," a "dangerous and charismatic figure" besides. He tried to block her UCLA appointment, but "by that time it was too late"—June 1969. Undaunted, McGill called Avrum Stroll, chair of the Philosophy Department, from which she received her degree: "I needed every bit of information in her files," since she "may have perjured herself in getting National Defense Education Act Title VI Fellowship" funds. He was disturbed by what he saw as "Maoist proclivities on the part of the Los Angeles party,"⁹⁷ strange given their anti-Maoist traits.

McGill seemed obsessed with Davis virtually to the point of clinical paranoia. As she was leaving for UCLA, he recounted that dealing with her and her comrades presented "one of the wildest periods ever seen at UCSD and one that I will not soon forget." L-Z was at issue, of course, and amounted to a "weapon" wielded. Early on he was told that she was an "underground member of an elite

94. Remarks by Erica Sherover, ca. 1971-1972, Box 45, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

95. Davis, *Autobiography*, 68.

96. Davis to "Dearest Dearmon and Sonja," 29 November 1971, Box 48, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

97. McGill Journal, ca. 1970, Box 247, Chancellor Subject Files.

Communist Party group in Los Angeles and a liaison figure" with the Panthers. "I began warning Chuck Young [UCLA chancellor] about her," that "an elite CP figure was calling the shots" on Southland campuses.⁹⁸ McGill probably heard about the February 1970 pro-Panther rally in L.A. attended by about four dozen dissident GIs from nearby military bases—the fearsome Movement for a Democratic Military, a real threat to unit cohesion at a time of war—along with filmmaker Melvin Van Peebles, who recited poetry. Elaine Brown sang what was called the "Black Panther National Anthem," and though the featured speaker was "Masai" Hewitt, the incandescent appearance was by Professor Davis, who spoke at length.⁹⁹ A few months later she was alongside BPP counsel Charles Garry and David Hilliard at the Unitarian Church.¹⁰⁰ Just before the eventful 7 August 1970, the BPP itself arrived in force at UCLA for a benefit featuring musician Johnny Otis: The tagline was the extraordinary number of comrades who had been slain by either the authorities or US in recent years.¹⁰¹

(McGill was not alone in seeing a BPP-CP tie as nightmarish: Morrie Ryskind, the socialist turned conservative who improbably wrote lines for Groucho, Harpo and the other Marx Brothers, listened to a tape of the Panthers and Communists at the anti-fascist confab and found it "terrifying."¹⁰²)

McGill admitted that he enjoyed a "close working relationship with the San Diego Police Department and...the City Attorney's Office" and was "improving liaison with the County Sheriff and the District Attorney's Office."¹⁰³ And with the FBI, a response to campus radicalism.

The problem for McGill is that he wanted to lead a purge akin to the 1950s and would have won plaudits from the governor if he did, but contradictions were so sharp then, that this became difficult. For McGill himself was involved in "serious combat with the governor and his Regent-Mafia on the issue of political screening of faculty appointments," which would not be embraced by other liberals—whom UCSD's leader thought he was at least loosely part of—especially the American Civil Liberties Union, in the process of regaining its mission, eroded during the excesses of McCarthyism. Chancellors statewide were smarting over the sacking of Berkeley's leader, Clark Kerr, at the hands of the

98. McGill to John Galbraith, 14 July 1969, Box 249, Chancellor Subject Files.

99. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 27 February 1970.

100. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 12 June 1970.

101. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 14 August 1970. See also Lori Andrews, *Black Power, White Blood: The Life and Times of Johnny Spain*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999, 186: "The Los Angeles chapter" was deemed to be the "roughest section of [the] Panthers. It was a joke throughout the Party that if you violated one of the Party rules, the biggest punishment was you'd get sent to Los Angeles. The Panthers," in turn, "thought the LAPD was completely crazy. The chapter had more people killed than all other chapters." Once a police officer was so upset with a cross-examination by a Panther attorney that "on the stand" he "pulled his gun [and] aimed it" at the startled litigator.

102. *San Diego Evening Tribune*, 10 October 1969, Box 248, Chancellor Subject Files.

103. McGill to President Hitch of UC, 9 June 1970, Box 246, Chancellor Subject Files.

Reagan cabal, leading Kerr to denounce the governor for claiming he was uninvolved in the firing: He was not "trustworthy," said Kerr.¹⁰⁴ The struggle over Davis was also a struggle between political appointees (Regents) and chancellors (seen as creatures of the faculty). It emerged at Davis's trial that as of 15 May 1970 the Regents sought to "relieve the president of the University, the Chancellor of the Los Angeles campus and all other administrative officers" of any role in her fate.¹⁰⁵ 7 August made this moot to a degree. Said her counsel, Michael Tigar, her September 1969 sacking was ruled unconstitutional but she was fired again in June 1970 after purported "inflammatory" words—and, then the unleashed Regents came after this law professor because of his competent defense of her.¹⁰⁶ "Who can deny," said UCLA faculty member Robert Singleton, "that the precipitating event for the entire Angela Davis controversy was the determination on the part of the...Regents to violate their own standing rules to discharge her?"¹⁰⁷

At the same time McGill was akin to his peer: Chancellor Cheadle at UCSB was "demoralized over his continuing and uninterrupted difficulties with Black Power militants" who were not averse to "ugly threats," yet they retained a modicum of support in the wider Black community who also desired more Black Studies courses and hiring of more Black faculty. These administrators were stuck, trapped. Perhaps this is what led to their similarity with the Panthers and the FBI and their cloudy thinking: At their meetings there was much imbibing of alcoholic beverages, leaving them soused. "Catherine Hearst lifted many eyebrows by kissing me publicly,"¹⁰⁸ said the UCSD leader, widely perceived as handsome, speaking of the Golden State heiress.

Again, McGill was no fan of Davis in this regard, as he had to confront her "debut as a radical organizer," accompanied by her "unpleasant" and "reedy" voice. He saw the Marcuse couple as her accomplices, and not just intellectually, since he thought that she and Inge Marcuse had collaborated in radicalism with the philosopher's complicity.¹⁰⁹ Still, this graduate student, then professor, was the centerpiece of his memoir, which a dismissive critic described as "flat and clichéd."¹¹⁰

104. *Sacramento Bee*, 13 May 1968, Box 26, William McGill Papers. For more on the dismissal of Kerr, see Box 11, Robert Elliott Papers-UCSD (abbrev. Robert Elliott Papers).

105. Memo, 15 May 1970, Reel 1, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

106. Michael Tigar, *Sensing Injustice: A Lawyer's Life in the Battle for Change*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 2021, 277, 266. Cf. Attack on Tigar for alleged ties to Communists organizing a Youth Festival in Helsinki: *Tocsin*, 6 November 1962, CSU-Fullerton.

107. Statement by Singleton, 5 August 1970, Box 7, Robert Singleton Papers.

108. McGill to John Galbraith, 21 April 1969, Box 249, Chancellor Subject Files. Cf. FBI Report on CP leader Healey: "No reports of [DH] drinking to excess, having misused party funds, having engaged in marital affairs or any other incident that would be amenable for use in the counterintelligence program": Report, 25 June 1968, Box 3, Dorothy Healey Papers-UCLA.

109. William J. McGill, *The Year of the Monkey*, New York: McGraw Hill, 1982, 13, 32, 123, 146.

110. *Kirkus Review*, 1 July 1982, Box 26, William McGill Papers.

Still, McGill was told "in strict confidence" that Marcuse was central to the "current sit-ins"; he had "consistently advised the students to avoid any kind of violence or damage," but this was hardly exculpatory.¹¹¹

The legacy she left in La Jolla continued to percolate, though she remained a simple freeway hike away in Westwood. For even after she departed, her sister Fania—and her partner, Sam Jordan—remained on campus and under scrutiny.¹¹² Despite, or perhaps because of this surveillance, Jordan was fired at thrice by a sheriff's deputy and was arrested.¹¹³

The La Jolla campus was a former military base, appropriate given the conservative politics that arose there.¹¹⁴ The arrival of the La Jolla campus—Marcuse and Davis notwithstanding—also brought a corps of scientists, such as oceanographers, academic-turned-billionaire Irving Jacobs of Qualcomm fame, and the like.¹¹⁵ A good deal of their research was war-related, which did not go down well with students, many of whom fretted about being conscripted for combat. It was a "National Campus Crisis" said UC Regents, McGill noting the "very substantial amount of federally supported research activity...funded [by] the Department of Defense," leading to ever sterner "critics" and "militant protests...against what was called 'war research.'" It was an "extremely difficult atmosphere" and "inflammatory" besides.

Up the freeway in Santa Barbara, Chancellor Vernon Cheadle had yet to tamp down protests spilling over from Isla Vista: it was "volatile," he argued, with an "effort...made to physically prevent students from attending classes" creating a "state of uneasiness."¹¹⁶ Then 30 students in La Jolla invaded the campus business office, with—said a forlorn administrator—the "record of a CIA

111. Gabriel Jackson to McGill, 4 May 1970, Box 247, Chancellor Subject Files.

112. George Murphy to Cy Greaves, 10 December 1969, Box 247, Chancellor Subject Files.

113. *People's World*, 29 November 1969.

114. The eminent nuclear pioneer Harold Urey of La Jolla, as of 1952, was "entirely in sympathy" with the "aims" of the Council Against Communism. See Urey to Arthur McDowell, 21 January 1952, Box 22, Harold Urey Papers-UCSD (abbrev. Harold Urey Papers). However, as times changed, so did he. See Urey to McDowell, 10 August 1959, Box 22: "I should like to have my name removed from the mailing list.... odd to me that it is never possible to have an organization against Communism without it being a McCarthy type organization at the same time.... I should like to have no more of your mail come to my office." See also Herbert Marcuse to Urey, 2 August 1966, Box 55, Harold Urey Papers: Congratulations on signing "protest telegram to the White House" as a "true spokesman for the humane goals of science and for the responsible dissent which is so vital in a democracy."

115 "Higher Education as an Economic Force in San Diego," 27 January 1967, Box 11, Robert Elliott Papers.

116 Minutes of Regents' Meeting, 15 May 1970, Box 246, Chancellor Subject Files. See *The Black Panther*, 14 May 1977. According to Huey Newton, when UCSB erupted in 1970, the San Luis Obispo "Penal Colony dispatched members of the 'goon squad' to assist in putting down the rebellion." *The Black Panther*, 3 June 1978: FBI "spied" on BSU at UCSB "with the assistance of...administrators, staff and students.... Army Intelligence also spied on the BSU...started on October 14, 1968...began with a protest over racism in the Athletic Department. Over 20 percent of the Black students" there were then on "athletic scholarships." In 1988 I arrived at this campus to chair Black Studies.

contract...taken."¹¹⁷ The issue was joined bloodily when George Winne, Jr. of UCSD self-immolated in an antiwar protest on campus: He "poured gasoline over his body."¹¹⁸ War researcher K.G.P. Sulzman was perturbed by a "student occupation" of his office. "Stop war research" was the cry as protesters continued to "pound and kick my door," he complained bitterly. They had paper bags on their heads to foil identification.¹¹⁹

Marcuse was being portrayed as a kind of Pied Piper of protest, but that label could have been affixed to Eldridge Cleaver too,¹²⁰ for after creating a buzzing hornet's nest at Berkeley, then Irvine, he arrived in La Jolla just as Davis was packing her bags for Westwood. He addressed a "large crowd" and a nervous McGill attended "repeatedly looking for signs of potential trouble," as "30 plainclothes San Diego police" were "on the scene at [his] invitation."¹²¹ Nevertheless—and typically—Cleaver subsequently turned on Davis in January 1970, alleging from his comfortable exile that "U.S. fascists with the active collusion of the U.S. Communist Party have turned the case of Angela Davis into a smokescreen...a tool in the hands of reactionary forces" designed to "conceal the trial of Bobby Seale." Moscow was also part of this presumed devilish plot since the "Soviet Union has seen fit to denounce and slander our party in its press."¹²²

Still, the chancellor's correspondent was disconsolate when Cleaver arrived, flanked by "private body guards (goon squads I call them) in front of the platform and on the balconies, in a scene reminiscent of Hitler's brown shirted, Fascist storm troopers"—an exaggeration indicative of a fevered state of mind.¹²³

An early Davis biographer argues that by the time she arrived in La Jolla for graduate study she was a "convinced Marxist" and "in the summer of 1968 she joined the Communist Party."¹²⁴ Whatever the case, Deacon Alexander, an Angeleno who became close to Davis—and who taught Afeni Shakur in New York City—makes the point that Charlene Mitchell and Franklin Alexander were essential to founding the Che-Lumumba club of the CP to which Davis affiliated and that she "would never have joined the Communist Party if it were not for the fact that she was recruited by Franklin and Kendra [Alexander],"¹²⁵ who were

117. Memo from R.C. Weinberger, Office of Business and Finance, 21 April 1970, Box 246, Chancellor Subject Files.

118. *San Diego Evening Tribune*, 11 May 1970, Box 247, Chancellor Subject Files.

119. K.G.P. Sulzman to Chancellor McGill, 11 May 1970, Box 247, Chancellor Subject Files.

120. See *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 2 October 1969: Davis: "I see myself in Eldridge Cleaver and the 24 San Fernando Valley State students" facing imprisonment.

121. McGill to Kenneth Rearwin, 7 July 1969, Box 246, Chancellor Subject Files.

122. *The Black Panther*, 23 January 1970.

123. Kenneth Rearwin to McGill, 4 June 1969, Box 246, Chancellor Subject Files.

124. Regina Nadelson, *Who is Angela Davis? The Biography of a Revolutionary*, New York: Wyden, 1972, 130.

125. Deacon Alexander, Oral History.

among her closest comrades. He marks the date as 1 June 1968 when she joined the CP. "I joined the same day," he says, then joined the BPP a few months later but resigned because party leader, "Bunchy" Carter—inspired by Cleaver—objected to dual memberships.¹²⁶

La Jolla was a replay of Brandeis in that by 1969 "minority"—mostly Black and Chicano—students were about 1% of total enrollment, enraging for many.¹²⁷ It was almost as if Chancellor McGill and UCSD were enthusiastic about shooing Davis away by 1969, for in March of that year, he met with her and other disgruntled students and found, to his dismay, that the "discussion was not cordial."¹²⁸ When he told his fellow chancellor at UCLA weeks later that the "situation here [is] very tense,"¹²⁹ it seemed that he was pleased she was heading north on the freeway to Westwood—although ousting her from the Golden State altogether was the preferred option. Ostensibly her detractors were overjoyed when she resigned from her National Defense Education Act Fellowship and departed La Jolla for Westwood.¹³⁰

After all, and with an iota of hyperbole, he was in the midst of a "Holy War between campus revolutionaries and police authorities,"¹³¹ with Davis in the vanguard. It was then that McGill mastered what he saw as the skill of facing down rebellious students, useful for his next job at Columbia University; it involved "focusing hostility on yourself and then making the crowd feel guilty... a political art," no less—necessary since "every other week there was a sit-in or a struggle of one kind or another."¹³² McGill thought the "theory of counter-revolution" deployed against campus radicals was "brilliantly effective."¹³³

Thus, as noted, once McGill became aware of Davis's recruitment to UCLA, he worked assiduously to overturn this decision. What unfurled was a ricocheting protest from La Jolla to Westwood, as administrators backed by elected officials sought to uphold the rhetoric of academic freedom while carving out a huge exception that would allow the sacking of Communists and radicals. Some Regents of the University of California—equivalent to a Board of Directors—sought to dislodge Marcuse in 1969, just as Davis came under severe scrutiny.¹³⁴

126. Undated Remarks from Alexander, Box 46, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

127. *San Diego Magazine*, September 1969, Box 28, Chancellor Subject Files.

128. McGill to Academic Senate, 23 April 1969, Box 44, William McGill Papers.

129. Bill and Ann McGill to Chancellor Charles Young, 22 May 1969, Box 44, William McGill Papers.

130. Angela Davis to Professor Avrum Stroll, 2 June 1969, Box 248, Chancellor Subject Files. She was writing from 2243 Cambridge Avenue in Cardiff-by-the-Sea, Calif.

131. McGill to Chancellor Roger Heyns, 22 May 1969, Box 44, William McGill Papers.

132. William McGill, Oral History.

133. McGill to John Galbraith, 24 July 1969, Box 249, Chancellor Subject Files.

134. Report, 3 November 1969, Box 189, Donald Kalish Papers-UCLA (abbrev. Donald Kalish Papers).

Severe scrutiny indeed. Her travails were ignited barely had she finished unpacking boxes in her Westwood office. Recall that even before she left La Jolla, Chancellor McGill had received intelligence about her CP ties. Then William Tulio Divale, 27, a UCLA graduate student and paid FBI informant—and supposed “swinger”¹³⁵—posed as a CP member in order to gain intelligence about her membership.¹³⁶ A storm brewed and, what ensued was an attempt to sack her. But Professor Davis refused to retreat, restating her admiration for Marcuse, and adding: “I am a member of the Che-Lumumba club—a Black collective of the Communist Party of Southern California.”¹³⁷ Mervyn Dymally, leading Southland Black pol, reflected the sentiments of many of his constituents when he dismissed anticommunism—not so long ago, a secular religion with many compelled adherents—as “strictly a white man’s issue.”¹³⁸ Congressman Gus Hawkins of the Congressional Black Caucus posed the epochally relevant inquiry: “Why has Angela Davis,” he asked, “like W.E.B. Du Bois, Paul Robeson and others found solace in Communism?”¹³⁹

Davis was no stranger to the City of Angels, commuting regularly there even before the UCLA appointment. By May 1968 the FBI was listing her as an officer of SNCC whose “major projects,” they said, “consisted of karate and rifle club training” and “legal teams and medical teams to combat police brutality.”¹⁴⁰ Her comrades there included John Floyd of an earlier Panther iteration; Ron Wilkins of the Community Alert Patrol; Tommy Jacquette of the Watts Festival; and Franklin Alexander of the CP. The FBI thought they had reason to believe that SNCC members in LA “have been urged to be armed at all times and should be considered armed and dangerous”—providing carte blanche for aggression toward them.¹⁴¹ Just before then, according to the FBI, four Black men were arrested at SNCC headquarters, shotguns in hand. Somehow the authorities had got hold of a membership list that not only included Davis but Danny Bakewell too, who came to own the weekly *Sentinel*.¹⁴² Soon Wilkins was arrested for alleged kidnapping, though charges were swiftly dismissed since the purported “victim” refused to file charges since, said the FBI, he feared that Wilkins and company “would kill him.” The FBI also thought that SNCC was “formulating plans to bomb the FBI office” itself.¹⁴³ Supposedly, SNCC provided “instructions

135. *People's World*, 21 June 1969. See the summary account in the *Los Angeles Free Press*, 26 September–2 October 1969. See also *People's World*, 13 December 1969: Divale changes course and backs Davis and assails the Subversive Activities Control Board, prime CP tormentor.

136. *People's World*, 12 July 1969.

137. *People's World*, 27 September 1969.

138. *People's World*, 4 October 1969.

139. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 24 September 1970.

140. Memo, 12 May 1968, Reel 2, FBI File on SNCC, UCB.

141. Memo, 29 May 1968, Reel 2, FBI File on SNCC, UCB.

142. Memo, 6 April 1968, Reel 2, FBI File on SNCC, UCB.

143. Memo, 5 August 1968, Reel 2, FBI File on SNCC, UCB.

for making of Molotov cocktails, bombs and booby traps for sabotage...this literature was published in Communist China.”¹⁴⁴ A year later in 1969, as the Davis-UCLA flap was accelerating, the FBI reported that SNCC, “located at 7406 S. Western currently does not have an office due to their inability to pay rent. Members of the organization have left it with the exception of [Wilkins]”—yet the group was still deemed to be “armed and dangerous,” providing a rationale for further harassment.¹⁴⁵

By that point, Davis had been part of the CP for a number of months and was to share a flat with the comrade known as Tamu McFalls. There were about “twenty something members at one time,” this mechanic’s daughter said of the Che-Lumumba Club. An attraction was that Franklin Alexander liked to cook, which was seductive to many.¹⁴⁶ Davis chose to move from this flat, however, because it had become a hub of political activism, shrinking her time allotted to academic work.¹⁴⁷ McFalls and Davis were roommates until July 1970 at 215 West 45th Street, where a gun rack was ensconced in the closet.¹⁴⁸

By then UC Regents were enmeshed in a round-robin of meetings, mulling as to whether Davis should be fired because of her admitted Communist Party membership. Dorothy Healey remained as leader of the Southland Reds and had an eagle-eye view of the unfolding crisis. She was unruffled by the stories of SNCC cadre and weaponry since “everybody...was practicing with guns at that point, including the Communist youth, white and Black. That was the most popular thing.” But, she says, “Angela was really divided between on the one hand being an intellectual and on the other hand proving her toughness,” that Healey derided as “youthful antics...and the posture of toughness.” After her close friend Deacon Alexander was ousted from the BPP after joining the CP, Healey suggests that this made her continued affiliation with the Panthers problematic too. She recalls Professor Davis bringing her the UC letter raising searching queries about her CP enrollment. She had been in Cuba and the letter had arrived at her San Diego address, delaying her response. “I remember our going out into the yard to talk so that the FBI...couldn’t tape the conversation inside my home.... I posed to her very sharply the question that she had to be very sure in her mind what she wanted to do, whether she wanted to be a Communist.”

So, the two comrades consulted with the left-wing attorney John McTernan about her options. “Her own inclination,” says Healey, was “to take the Fifth and refuse to answer the questions” about her membership but McTernan “pointed out...that this would not create new legal ground” but admitting membership would do so. This latter stance catapulted this young comrade “into a position of

144. Memo, 18 December 1968, Reel 2, FBI File on SNCC, UCB.

145. Memo, 26 November 1969, Reel 2, FBI File on SNCC, UCB.

146. Valerie “Tamu” McFalls, Oral History, ca. 2021, CSU-Northridge.

147. “Trial Bulletin,” 26 May 1972, Box 44, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

148. Transcript, 22 May 1972, Reel 12, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

being a public spokesman" and, Healey said, "she handled it in a very, very important way."¹⁴⁹

Pressure was coming from on high: Gov. Reagan had been elected in 1966, running on a platform that pledged there would not be another Berkeley 1964 mass protest nor a Watts 1965—and Professor Davis seemed to represent a confluence of the two. But like Chancellor McGill, his Regents were stuck, trapped. Ousting her on anticommunist grounds was the likely route, though this would not be embraced by civil libertarians who had learned the bitter lessons of McCarthyism and could mean "great restiveness," they concluded. But ousting her on racist grounds would be even more controversial.¹⁵⁰

Again, Professor Davis barely had secured lodging in L.A. when the Regents, on 24 June 1969, reaffirmed their policy of 11 October 1940 (reaffirmed 21 April 1950) of not hiring Reds.¹⁵¹ Vice Chancellor David Saxon of UCLA, citing the *Daily Bruin* of 1 July 1969 and the *San Francisco Examiner*, wrote to her at 11107½ 87th Street in L.A. inquiring if she in fact was a Communist.¹⁵² Saxon should have known better since he had direct experience with the malevolence of the Red Scare.¹⁵³

Professor Donald Kalish, Chair of Philosophy and substantially responsible for her hiring, was forced to deny he was a Communist. A keen-eyed reporter noticed the picture of the dissident philosopher Bertrand Russell on his office wall—his "idol," explained the teacher, on whom he wrote his dissertation.¹⁵⁴ Kalish was decidedly a man of the left, active in draft resistance particularly.¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁹ Dorothy Healey, Oral History: Davis's journey to Cuba before assuming her UCLA post was critical since this island was "another big influence on her...which of all the socialist countries is the one she feels closest to. This is, quote, 'her country.' From the beginning she has felt that way." As for Healey's point about the proliferation of weapons, see Deborah Jones, *What We Stood For: The Story of a Revolutionary Black Woman*, New York: Diasporic Africa Press, 2024, 55, 56: This erstwhile comrade of Karenga recalled that their group "always maintained that a violent revolution" was in the offing; thus, she was able to "break down and reassemble...a .357 Magnum in twenty-five seconds" and "that was too slow." See also Harold Brown, *Fighting the Color Monster*, 108: The spouse of this San Diego leader too hailed from Alabama and "her father taught his daughters how to shoot a gun for protection."

¹⁵⁰ Minutes of Regents' meeting, 19 September 1969, Box go60, Governor's Papers-RRPL.

¹⁵¹ Regents' Policy, 24 June 1969, Box go60, Governor's Papers-RRPL.

¹⁵² David Saxon to Professor Davis, July 1969, Box go60, Governor's Papers-RRPL.

¹⁵³ Obituary, *Los Angeles Times*, 9 December 2005, Box 7, Robert Singleton Papers.

¹⁵⁴ *Christian Science Monitor*, 1 November 1969.

¹⁵⁵ Karen Dellenbach, Oral History, October 2009, Box 2, Los Angeles Resistance Collection-LAPL: Kalish "asked me to staff some sort of anti-draft office in Westwood Village" as part of the "Vietnam Summer" of 1967: "Don paid the rent and me \$30 a week for the summer." Davis's Communist comrade Kendra Alexander was also involved in this branch of activism. In the same box, see document signed by her re: antiwar and civil disobedience support. Box 3, same collection: Dellenbach was an UCLA art student who was "followed by FBI and LAPD so much, she left L.A. for a remote part of Arizona." Another comrade in this movement was a "freshman backup quarterback" to star quarterback "Gary Beban in the Rose Bowl. Then he went to the downtown Los Angeles Induction Center, pulled out a large stack of their draft files and burned them in the street.... [he] had broken

He was a prime organizer of a powerful demonstration in Century City in June 1967—10,000 picketing President Johnson—and a similar protest against President Nixon in October 1972. Born in Chicago, he joined the faculty of UCLA in 1949; he bailed out protesters and favored—as a personal form of war tax resistance—“reducing by about 25% the amount he personally paid in income taxes,” as he insisted, “I am not a pacifist.”¹⁵⁶ To that end, he contributed to a “Panther ad” bringing support to this beleaguered group.¹⁵⁷ Yet he too was “physically attacked” as the Davis controversy unwound, according to the former UCSD student herself.¹⁵⁸ Ruefully, the bookish philosopher recounted not only the “continuing harassment” of his star recruit but the chilling comments from the governor warning of a “bloodbath” of campus unless things went his way.¹⁵⁹

This attack on Kalish also underscored why Davis felt herself vulnerable to the point of arming. In June 1970 American Federation of Teachers Local 990 at UCLA objected when police arrived on campus to “disperse a large group of persons” at a protest of militarism: 75 were arrested.¹⁶⁰

Kalish then informed his faculty that the muckraking journalist Ed Montgomery in the aforementioned *Examiner* said his latest recruit is a “known Maoist,” demonstrably false. He reminded that the Regents also, contradictorily, said in June 1969 there was “no political test” for hiring faculty, mush for the civil

into a Selective Service office and taken the files.” See also obituary of Norman Witty, 22 November 2013: “Resister...71...suspected of being an FBI agent...because of his filming L.A. demonstrations....guys in SDS were particularly suspicious of him and he despised them...he loved film...[who] fell in love with...daughter of an FBI agent by the name of Mark Felt,” the source for *Washington Post* revelations that drove President Nixon from office. Felt “flew to L.A. to check Norman’s fitness to live with his daughter Joan.” Then Witty’s “hearing became just terrible and everyone had to yell to talk to him.” It was Kalish who “came up with the suggestion to open a draft resistance office. He often was in the front rank of ‘luminaries’ who formed the first row in big peace marches” and was “instrumental” in hiring Davis. In the same collection in Box 3, see material from 1967 on how potential draftees can flee to Toronto.

156 Obituary, *Los Angeles Times*, 15 June 2000, Box 3, Los Angeles Resistance Collection-LAPL. The Century City protest was an important step toward LBJ choosing not to run for reelection. See *Los Angeles Free Press*, 26 June 1967, Box 7, Los Angeles Resistance Collection-LAPL.

157. Bettina Aptheker to “Dear Don,” 6 March 1970. Box 189, Donald Kalish Papers.

158. Davis, *Autobiography*, 191.

159. Interview with Kalish, 14 December 1971, Box 46, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

160. Report by AFT, Box 2, Donald Kalish Papers. In the same box, see also Geoffrey Symcox to “Dear Colleague,” 3 June 1970: “On May 7 I was knocked down and injured by an unmarked police car outside Haines Hall. The car contained two undercover agents of the LAPD...one of these agents, Sgt. Harry Kozak...taking courses in our [History] department since Summer 1969”; he also complained of “secret police surveillance.” In the same box, see also Department of Special Education Programs to Chancellor Young, 14 May 1970: “May 5...Campbell Hall was the only building where staff and students were run-down, attacked and beaten...many Indian students have fled the campus for their reservations for fear of being assaulted...two Asian students were beaten and arrested...Black student Webster Moore, while approaching Campbell Hall was chased, subdued and beaten in the face with a billy club...threatened to kill him...handcuffed and dragged...two Black women were beaten...many other Black students were beaten”; many Black students particularly were singled out for a “frenzied orgy of beating; kicking and cursing.”

libertarians. And, just in case, that same month the Academic Senate warned the Regents by a margin of 696-151 against seeking to impose political tests. Then in August 1969 Kalish's department concurred, adding with a twist: "the Soviet Union has imposed political tests,"¹⁶¹ so why should UCLA?

Professor Davis responded in early September, explaining that "I left the country July 19," hence her tardy reply to their "impermissible" question—but, yes, she proclaimed her membership. "As a Black woman," she exhorted, "I feel an urgent need to find radical solutions to the problems of racial and national minorities in [the] white capitalist United States"—and, by the way, her redness was "irrelevant" to her employment.¹⁶²

The high-mindedness notwithstanding, conservatives consistently had opposed the appearance of radicals on campus. In 1966 the Mayor of Tustin¹⁶³ and the American Legion of Orange County were among those who objected to the appearance of Dorothy Healey at UC-Irvine.¹⁶⁴ Sensing the direction of the winds, Chancellor Daniel Aldrich of UCI objected to the hiring of Professor Davis or Reds more generally.¹⁶⁵ There was the lingering toxicity of McCarthyism to overcome in the form of "loyalty oaths," which led to purges of non-conservatives generally.¹⁶⁶

It was also in October 1969 that the UCLA chancellor opposed her sacking.¹⁶⁷ Even the mainstream radio station KABC broadcast an editorial eight times on their FM channel and 10 times on AM, backing Davis.¹⁶⁸ Again, strident objection came from still powerful conservatives, including Howard Jarvis, whose referendum a few years later upended the state's tax structure to the severe detriment of the working class and the poor. If she were allowed to teach, he

161. Donald Kalish to Faculty, 27 August 1969, Box 6060, Governor's Papers-RRPL. See *San Francisco Examiner*, 9 July 1969, for "known Maoist" descriptor. Kalish also solicited letters of support for Davis. See, e.g., Letter from Princeton Philosophy Department to Kalish, 7 January 1970, Box 15; Norman Malcolm, Chair of Philosophy-Cornell, ca. January 1970; George Scharder, Chair Philosophy-Yale, 31 October 1969; Letter of Support from American Philosophical Association, October 1969; R.L. Brackenbury, Chair of University Senate-University of Southern California, January 1970; Neal Wood, Professor, York University, Canada, 2 October 1969: "Possibility" c. offering her a post there: All in Donald Kalish Papers. In Box 2 of this collection, see editorial opposing Davis's sacking at UCLA: *New York Times*, 5 June 1970, and *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, May 1970. See also Interview with Louis Asekoff, April 1972, Box 45, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard: By 1969 the sought-after scholar was being pursued by Princeton, Yale and Swarthmore.

162. Professor Davis to Chancellor Charles Young, 5 September 1969, Box 6060, Governor's Papers-RRPL.

163. Mayor G.C. Mack to Chancellor Daniel Aldrich, 30 May 1966, Series 3, Box 25, Central Records Collection-UC-Irvine.

164. *Santa Ana Register*, 16 June 1966, Series 3, Box 25, Central Records Collection-UC-Irvine.

165. *Daily Pilot*, 3 October 1969, Series 3, Box 25, Central Records Collection-UC-Irvine.

166. See thick file on Loyalty Oaths, Box 250, Series 2A, Central Records Collection-UC-Irvine.

167. Chancellor Young to Academic Senate, 1 October 1969, Box 1, Collected Materials about Angela Davis-UCLA (abbrev. Angela Davis Collected Materials-UCLA).

168. Editorial, 7-8 October 1969, Box 1, Angela Davis Collected Materials-UCLA.

growled, you might as well hire the "Cosa Nostra" to teach.¹⁶⁹ The ultra-leftist Progressive Labor Party did not dub her a "Maoist": No, she was a "liberal," and that "building a movement to defend Prof. Davis is at best a diversion from organizing and fighting against imperialism and racism on campus."¹⁷⁰

Dissenting vigorously were Black faculty at UCLA who threatened to withhold grades if "Miss Davis' classes are not given full credit," which had been threatened. Unmoved, and likely sensing a campaign issue, Gov. Reagan attacked both Kalish and the chancellor. Judge Mendel Jerome "Jerry" Pacht, whose background as a left-wing activist escaped the immediate attention of many conservatives, ruled that the Regents' anticommunist policy was unconstitutional, removing immediate roadblocks (earlier the case was before Judge Robert Kenny of a similar background: Communist organizing from decades earlier was bearing fruit). So propelled, by December 1969 the UC Academic Senate—from Davis to San Diego—voted 2487 to 1139 to abolish the anticommunist hiring policy, and though Judge Pacht's ruling was overturned on appeal, effectively the faculty had the final word.¹⁷¹ There was an attempt, however, to recall or remove from office both Pacht and Kenny.¹⁷²

A sign of changing times arose when the ACLU demanded to be allowed to join her legal team—reversing their weaknesses of prior eras: "Sail under the banner of ACLU..." was their recommendation to Professor Davis's backers.¹⁷³ They had a kindred soul in Robert Singleton, acting director of Afro-American Studies at UCLA. He tartly told the *Los Angeles Times* that "it can be documented there are white Communists teaching at the university who are not being harassed as she is being harassed."¹⁷⁴ That is, there was a question of both racism and equal protection under the law. Singleton, who met Franklin Alexander in 1960 and conferred frequently with Davis, recalled graphically that after her arrival on campus "bomb scares and threats on Angela's life" accelerated. "[I]t was very scary...I was slightly frightened" and especially stunned by the "anonymous phone calls."¹⁷⁵ At a certain point, recalled Erica Sherover, a colleague from UCSD, "threats on her life [were] made by her landlord," a pattern of "continuous threats on he life."¹⁷⁶ Future eminent film studies scholar Clyde Taylor attended

169. Rebuttal by Howard Jarvis, 14-15 October 1969, Box 1, Angela Davis Collected Materials-UCLA.

170. Statement by PLP, ca. October 1969, Box 1, Angela Davis Collected Materials-UCLA.

171. Statements in "Chronology of the Angela Davis Case," October 1969, Box 1, Angela Davis Collected Materials-UCLA.

172. *Los Angeles Times*, 28 October 1969.

173. Eason Monroe, executive director, to Arthur Manella, Century City, 3 October 1969, Box 212, ACLU Records-UCLA.

174. *Los Angeles Times*, 24 September 1969, Box 44, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

175. Doris Walker interviews Robert Singleton, 13 December 1971, Box 45, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

176. Report by Erica Sherover, ca. 1971-2, Box 45, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

her classes, where he watched the Panther favorite, *The Battle of Algiers*. He "looked upon her as a Black Militant whereas the white faculty members tended to focus on the fact...that she was a Communist." The former view was shaped by hearing her speech at City Hall after the December 1969 siege of the BPP headquarters.¹⁷⁷ UCLA graduate student in history, Sonja Walker, recalled that the siege transformed Davis: "Some of the Black students had criticized her earlier because she limited her activities to making speeches." Walker also knew of an alleged car bomb threat delivered to the professor.¹⁷⁸ Black campus cop Thomas Stewart recalled this time where there were eight Negroes out of 45 on the force. The non-Blacks, sworn to protect her, instead thought "they should wipe her out," while he was "proud of Angela," common currency in the Black working class.¹⁷⁹

Even the prominent historian Gary Nash "knew the kind of threats that she received from the moment she was on this campus," for he "received many threats" too after he was identified as a supporter of hers. "They told me exactly how they were going to kill my children and so on," as the chastened scholar retained a "bundle of...mail" saying as much.¹⁸⁰

Davis received a more substantial amount of hate mail. Typical was the October 1969 missive from Jacob Rabinowitz and his family from Aromas, Calif., near Monterey. "Communists are the scourge of the world and should be exterminated," he demanded, and "should have been placed in Concentration Camps years ago!"¹⁸¹ She had to take such threats seriously. She recalled near this time returning from "Franklin and Kendra's (50th St.)...a brother friend of min[e] and my Che Lumumba comrades, UCLA student, leading member of the Black Students Alliance—found Sunday morning on a deserted road/two bullets in his head...pigs? Minutemen? Not one clue," but "undoubtedly a political assassination." In recent days she "discovered at least one pig (Black) among my 450 students—he called himself confessing."¹⁸² "Hardly a day passed," she said about her storm-tossed year at UCLA, "when I didn't receive a death threat."¹⁸³

Former Davis student Frances Bishop recalled "many threats on [the professor's] life. Some man had been following her, tried to run her over in a car. People were calling her and threatening her."¹⁸⁴ Professor Frederic Meyers of the

177. Doris Walker interviews Clyde Taylor, 26 January 1972, Box 45, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

178. Doris Walker interviews Sonja Walker, 27 January 1972, Box 45, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

179. Doris Walker interviews Thomas Stewart, 26 January 1972, Box 45, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

180. Doris Walker interviews Gary Nash, 14 December 1971, Box 45, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

181. Jacob Rabinowitz and family to Professor Davis, 22 October 1969, Reel 13, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS. Tellingly, a theme of this hateful correspondence was hatred for her hair—and she should depart for either Cuba or the Soviet Union.

182. Davis to George Jackson, undated, ca. 1969, Box 3, Angela Davis Legal Defense Collection.

183. Remarks by Davis, n.d., Box 2, Angela Davis Legal Defense Collection.

184. Doris Walker interviews Frances Bishop. 21 December 1971, Box 45, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

Department of Management was part of the Young Communist League from 1935 to 1938 and knew a "substantial number...of faculty members who own weapons who know how to use them and who keep them in their residences,"¹⁸⁵ making Davis not atypical in housing arms. Betty Wilson, departmental secretary in Philosophy, routinely opened mail and sensed Davis's "growing fear" as death threats mounted. Threatening calls could begin at 8 A.M. "and they lasted until the telephone closed down at 5 P.M." There were easily 1000 letters containing a "bomb threat." Her colleague Connie Price also saw these threats as "frightening" and was panicked by the notion of "nuts walking around the streets who wanted to kill [her]."¹⁸⁶ Matters had become so dire that by early December 1969, her attorney, John McTernan, warned Roger Murdock, chief detective at the LAPD, about it.¹⁸⁷ Disturbing was the November 1969 report when her sister was jailed for assault and, said one account, "allegedly exchanged gunfire with officers."¹⁸⁸ Professor Davis had to tread carefully since the Southland was a stronghold for the armed ultra-right. The Minutemen of San Diego, as she was moving to Westwood, declared that Communists were "wanted for treason" and one could unveil them easily since their "occupation" was "usually student or professor" and were controlled by the "International Communist Conspiracy."¹⁸⁹ Another broadside declared "Equal Rights for whites," a presumed deficit for which Communists were said to be responsible.¹⁹⁰

185. Doris Walker interviews Frederic Meyers, 13 December 1971, Box 45, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

186. Doris Walker interviews Betty Wilson and Connie Price, 23 November 1971, Box 45, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

187. John McTernan to Roger Murdock, 1 December 1969, Box 48, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

188. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 20 November 1969.

189. Leaflet, ca. 1970, Box 6, Los Angeles Resistance Collection-LAPL. As noted, the right wing was strong along the border with Mexico—but so was the left. This trend was symbolized by Harry Steinmetz, chased out of town during the Red Scare but materializing in Atlanta as a comrade of Dr. Martin Luther King. See Vertical File—"Harry Steinmetz," San Diego History Center, *Carlsbad Journal*, 29 August 1935: Here he is described as a "recent defeated candidate for Mayor of San Diego...a declared Socialist...his strength developed among organized labor." *San Diego Union*, 23 June 1935. Students at the then San Diego State College back Steinmetz after he is "ousted" from the County Federated Trades and Labor Council. *Sun*, 8 September 1936: Steinmetz elected Vice President of the national American Federation of Teachers. Clipping, 25 March 1948: Steinmetz backs presidential campaign of Henry A. Wallace. *Independent San Diego Newsweekly*, 22 July 1955: Steinmetz denoted as "San Diego's most controversial figure." Of course, the presence of figures like Steinmetz and Davis served to inflame the ultra-right more intensively. And again, in assessing radicalism along the border, it would be an error to discount the influence of Mexico. The Black writer Willard Motley, who exiled there before expiring in 1965, observed: "Every Mexican boils with anger every time there is an anti-Negro incident in the United States. A dark-skinned race themselves they vehemently resent the prejudice against Negroes." See Rebecca M. Schreiber, *Cold War Exiles: U.S. Dissidents and the Culture of Critical Resistance*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008, 145. Cf. Vertical File, "Afro-American Colonization Company of Mexico," 1892, San Diego History Center: Southern Negroes flee south of the border to elude Jim Crow terror.

190. Leaflet, undated, Box 6, Los Angeles Resistance Collection-LAPL.

While this back and forth was whirring, Professor Davis, existing on an annual salary of \$9684,¹⁹¹ was teaching her classes and embroiled in political work, particularly on behalf of the imprisoned George Jackson and his comrades in Soledad, Cleaver's former residence. After the exposure of her CP tie, she received favorable treatment in the local Black press. She was "fuzz haired" and had the "appearance...of a charming co-ed."¹⁹² More typical of the mainstream was her coverage in the conservative *Herald-Examiner*. Students "Cheer 'Red' Teacher" was their takeaway, describing the young academic "wearing a multi-colored miniskirt," her outfit an obsessional fixation for some reporters. "More than 1900 filled Royce Hall"—spectacular attendance by any measure. And she "received a standing ovation from about 80 percent of the crowd both at the beginning and end of the lecture."¹⁹³ Another counter enumerated 1800 in the room but elaborated on a three-day conference on her case, featuring State Senator Dymally.¹⁹⁴ Others were not as impressed—those who disapproved of her "fuzzy...hair style" comparable to those adorning "heathens in the Fiji Islands," intended as an insult.¹⁹⁵

In the prelude to 7 August, Professor Davis was hardly in hiding from these multiple threats. In February she addressed 3000 in Santa Barbara, already leveraging her celebrity on behalf of the movement.¹⁹⁶ Days later, students were rampaging, and those seeking a scapegoat alighted on her presence. This was serious: 16 law enforcement agencies from three counties, involving 390 cops, had to ride to the rescue, but order was not restored until the National Guard arrived. In the end, 116 officers were injured, seven were hospitalized and, it was said, "trauma" descended countywide.¹⁹⁷ The leader of the UC system blamed her, but also targeted was the UCSB sociologist Richard Flacks and the law professor who would wind up defending Davis during her trial on capital charges, Michael Tigar. Typically, there was contagion, as when disturbances at Berkeley erupted. they drew in junior high and high school students.¹⁹⁸

191. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 25 September 1969.

192. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 2 October 1969. Cf. the idiosyncratic *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 11 October 1969: Their front page editorial objected to her being sacked by UCLA, while noting bizarrely that the "majority of UCLA instructors are Communist," and she was "involving herself in what we consider a criminal conspiracy against the best interests of her race." *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, 6 December 1969: "Regents harass" Davis; the "*Herald-Dispatch* has spent much time observing Miss Davis, attending her classes.... these charges are ridiculous to the point of being childish.... from our visits to Miss Davis' lectures....there is no basis for any of these charges of political indoctrination."

193. *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner*, 7 October 1969, Box 43, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

194. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 17 October 1969.

195. Clipping ca. 1969, Box 43, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

196. Clipping, 6 February 1970, Box 4, Uarch 36, Student Unrest Subject Files.

197. Report, 25 February 1970, Box 6061, Governor's Papers-RRPL.

198. Report, 17 April 1970, Box 6061, Governor's Papers-RRPL. In the midst of the Davis trial, the death penalty was invalidated in California: Transcript, 23 February 1972, Reel 7, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

Gov. Reagan was monitoring the situation, as even the heartfelt remarks of A.W. Clausen, commanding leader of the Bank of America, at their shareholders' meeting concerning the ongoing Isla Vista crisis, made their way to his Sacramento desk.¹⁹⁹ Regent Fred Dutton, a Davis backer, in the midst of a lengthy discussion of this matter, had the perspicacity to raise the obvious: "Students in I.V.," he said, "have been exploited by commercial interests" in Isla Vista—expensive housing and food—infuriating them to the point where they were willing to torch a symbol of capitalism: the Bank of America.²⁰⁰

Such appearances had not won Davis many friends among the Regents, as she was now seemingly supplanting Cleaver, then Marcuse, as the purported Pied Piper. By May they voted 15-6 against this untenured professor after having "reviewed the entire record," though system-wide administrators were opposed. Regent Fred Dutton, a former aide to ex-Gov. "Pat" Brown, dissented from the consensus of these other political appointees.²⁰¹

Then Chancellor Young appointed a "blue ribbon" body not to go into the Regents' decision, nor if she should be appointed, but only to determine if she has "failed to fulfill her responsibilities" as faculty. Dutton on the warpath assailed this "star chamber" proceeding in that she was being investigated by an unknown committee without her knowing the charges or an opportunity to refute them.²⁰² Somehow the case of Harry Edwards of San Jose State University, then Berkeley, the crusader on behalf of Black athletes, got entangled with her case to the detriment of both.²⁰³

Finally, Chancellor Young delivered a report stating the obvious: Professor Davis, in teaching courses on such matters as recurring themes in Black Literature, was not indoctrinating her students.²⁰⁴ In the meantime, arriving in Sacramento were 124 letters with 668 signatures opposing Davis and, as was said, "calling for her immediate removal," while scores of her students lavished praise upon her.²⁰⁵ What was haunting her case was the presumably unrelated matter of Cleaver, who had ignited a firestorm of protest before departing for Algiers, when he was allowed to teach a course at Berkeley.²⁰⁶ Gov. Reagan told his "fellow citizen" that he received 12,000 letters with 20,000 signatures opposing this

199. Remarks of A.W. Clausen, 17 March 1970, Box 6061, Governor's Papers-RRPL.

200. Discussion on I.V., 19 March 1970, Box 6061, Governor's Papers-RRPL. On the same date and file, see also the statement from County Supervisor George Clyde on the bank burning.

201. Memo, 19 June 1970, Box 6061, Governor's Papers-RRPL.

202. Memo, 19 February 1970, Box 6061, Governor's Papers-RRPL.

203. On Edwards see, e.g., Letter of 19 March 1970, Box 6061, Governor's Papers-RRPL.

204. Report, 17 April 1970, Box 6061, Governor's Papers-RRPL.

205. Report, 15 April 1970, Box 6061, Governor's Papers-RRPL.

206. See, e.g., Special Assistant for Education to C.S. Shipley, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors of Napa County, ca. 1968, Box 145, Governor's Correspondence, Alpha X Files, Governor's Papers-RRPL.

professorial Panther but, said the chief executive angrily, "Regents failed to support your position and mine."²⁰⁷

The Regents were in a bind, knowing that firing Davis would fuel further protest, while failing to fire her enraged still hegemonic conservatives. She may have been gone from La Jolla, but was not forgotten. Students there denounced the "racist attack" on her and demanded that UCSD offer her a post if UCLA fired her. "Regents are out to fire over 25 professors," they charged accusingly, "[who] they feel are involved in antiwar, anti-racist activity," and Davis was the initial sacrificial lamb. They also demanded that "the Third World students...be provided with financial and legal assistance...in defense of their criminal charges" that they faced for previous fiery protests.²⁰⁸

There was adamant pushback. Maude Hill of San Diego wondered why "the colleges hire the Marcuses" and Davis, "not to mention the many foreign teachers (UCSD has its share) who apparently do not like the country...sorry to sound so bitter," she said bitterly.²⁰⁹ The woman who identified herself as "Mrs. Neil Fowler" of La Jolla was unrepentant, reminding the chancellor that "you allowed the flying of the North Vietnam flag over the campus, condoned and defended Marcuse and Angela Davis. I pay too much in taxes," she cried, "to do anything to encourage that university in any way. Chickens do come home to roost,"²¹⁰ she said philosophically.

The problem for the UC campuses statewide was that one crisis merged into another, creating a cyclonic effect. There were Davis at San Diego and UCLA and Flacks at UCSB bringing echoes of Cleaver at Berkeley in 1968. Regents were highly upset with Vernon Cheadle, the botanist turned chancellor, at Santa Barbara. Before arriving on campus, Flacks had been severely beaten in a mysterious event in Chicago, which seemed to augur similar occurrences in otherwise placid Santa Barbara. But it was Davis who was ruffling plumage, with Lieut. Gov. Ed Reinecke asserting that her "Story" was "all over Sacramento," according to McGill's recollection. Already McGill knew she was linked to the purchase of guns, for what reason he did not know, since the San Francisco reporter Ed Montgomery had leaked this to him, and he in turn had been briefed by the FBI.

Wily McGill sought to "avoid any complications involving her race and her militant activities"—in which case, what was the point of attack? But anticommunism brought constitutional issues, while racism brought community issues. And sacking her, in any case, "would produce violence on the UCLA campus and elsewhere" (code for La Jolla). But failing to fire her, McGill continued, meant a "disaster for the...Regents" and the state, leaving "no way

207. Governor Reagan to "Fellow Citizen," 3 October 1968, Box 145.

208. Undated Statement on Picketing, Box 246, Chancellor Subject Files.

209. Maude Hill to Chancellor McGill, 14 May 1970, Box 246, Chancellor Subject Files.

210. Mrs. Neil A. Fowler to McGill, ca. 12 May 1970, Box 246, Chancellor Subject Files.

out." He was undone when Davis openly admitted her CP membership. Chancellor Young was worse: "paranoid," said McGill. Their strategy was to take this sticky issue "into court as quickly as possible," but were undone further when at a tense meeting a "bearded Black man stood up and demanded...attention," apparently Robert Singleton, key ally of Davis on the UCLA faculty. Dissatisfied, this ally "stalked out" and held an "impromptu press conference" blasting one and all. McGill dismissed Dutton's idea that this Regent was opposed to the consensus to dismiss the embattled junior professor; McGill saw and heard unanimity (apparently a misunderstanding on his part). All the while, Reagan was "nodding his head vigorously in agreement with my [McGill's] remarks," i.e., to not appear to "crush her," while doing so. But then the crafty governor "slipped out a side door," leaving Chancellor Young to warn that a "major uprising" at this campus was due if they simply fired her. Furthermore, UCSD—and faculty due north—feared the precedent that the Davis case would set, fearing a "purge" aimed at "heretics" of various sorts. The Cleaver case had left a "residue of animosity" that had yet to dissipate while the usual suspects, like the "Freedom Foundation," said McGill, a "right extremist group, very popular in military minded San Diego" was planning to stir things up on campus. Davis was not barracking her tongue, said the besieged UCSD leader, but instead was "making statements on almost every television network beamed over Southern California to the fact that the Regents had fired her not because she was a Communist but because she was Black and a militant," meaning that "students would be licking up Angela's inflammatory rhetoric like honey from her fingers."

Like others, McGill displaced his anger at the Black community, not easy to express, toward Kalish, who engineered her hiring. Chancellor Young, still in his thirties, was freaking out: "I could hear his breath trembling," said McGill of his "deeply upset" peer "on the edge of tears." Barring her "physically" from class "would produce a riot on the Los Angeles campus." McGill was a bit overwrought himself, envisioning "Armageddon," a "bitter clash" between the UCLA chancellor and the Regents, making for the "worst crisis...since the firing of Clark Kerr" at Berkeley, also engineered by Reagan.²¹¹ McGill craftily told Young "in strict confidence" that since Kalish would not corral letters criticizing Davis, he should do what he did when seeking to undermine Marcuse: He contacted Ernest Nagel at Columbia for the purpose of gathering critical letters, "additional grist for the file."²¹²

McGill was anguished when Professor Davis returned to her old campus in October 1969, addressing a crowd of 1000 and dramatically speaking of the "possibility of fascism arising in this country." Also speaking and seating adjacent to her was the titular founder of "Marcuseland," the German émigré himself, who.

211. McGill Journal, circa 1970, Box 247, Chancellor Subject Files.

212. McGill to Chancellor Young, 17 November 1969, Box 249, Chancellor Subject Files.

said a reporter, made a "thinly disguised call for a student strike" in solidarity with his protégée.²¹³

The bourgeois press was up in arms. The conservative *San Diego Union* placed a Davis figure in a cartoon bearing a Communist hammer and sickle flag, heading toward a sign reading "wrong way do not enter" with a cop/Regent holding up his hand to stop—and the prescriptive inscription: "Do your duty, officer!"²¹⁴

213. *La Jolla Light and Journal*, 9 October 1969, Box 246, Chancellor Subject Files.

214. *San Diego Union*, 11 October 1969, Box 248, Chancellor Subject Files.

Chapter 16

Armed Struggle! 1970-1972

It was about 10:45 a.m. on 7 August 1970, and a sheriff's deputy in the San Rafael courthouse in Marin County, designed by "starchitect" Frank Lloyd Wright, was nervous—and not simply because a Black man, James McClain, was on trial for assaulting a San Quentin guard and acting as his own counsel, with another Black prisoner, Ruchell Magee, on the witness stand, as another Black prisoner, William Christmas, hovered outside waiting to testify.¹ There was a "problem involving gunplay," he recalled. "I then noticed a blue steel automatic pistol pointed at me" by a Black prisoner, Ruchell Magee. "Three bailiffs [were] lying face down on the floor, the jurors were lying on the floor of the jury box, the court reporter was lying face down." As for Judge Harold Haley, there "appeared to be a 12 gauge sawed off shotgun taped around his neck." Another Black prisoner, William Christmas, was "holding the weapon." The presumed ringleader, the youthful Jonathan Jackson, younger brother of the celebrated prisoner George Jackson, who in turn was quite close to Professor Davis, was "armed with a M-1 carbine with [paratrooper] stock." Jackson, he said, seemed "on edge" and "waved the weapon around constantly. He seemed to be the man in charge, although McClain rescinded his commands on several occasions." Magee seized the "green coat" of a captive and with wire bound jurors "encircling the one wrist and waist." Said Jackson, "Don't pull anything I'm nervous." By about 11:05 a.m. they exited with Jackson leading the entourage, but about five minutes later gunshots were heard—and about 10 minutes later, all was quiet.² (McClain, said Davis, was arrested in 1960 on a charge of felonious assault and spent seven years in San Quentin, then was rearrested in 1968. "[T]here was a hung jury," she said, "and, of course, a new trial was ordered and this new trial was interrupted on August 7." Like her, he sought to represent himself.³)

1. Transcript, 16 March 1971, Reel 2, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

2. Statement of Lt. E.M. Cummesky, ca. August 1970, Reel 5, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS. See Testimony of John H. Manwaring, pathologist, 13 April 1972, Reel 10. On Christmas: "well developed, well nourished, quite muscular Negro male, five feet three...135 [lbs.]" On McClain: "5'8 inches and estimated weight of 150 lbs...well developed and well nourished."

3. Transcript, 21 July 1971, Reel 3, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

Juror Maria Elena Graham was, she recalled, sitting in the "first seat on the first row nearest the entry." She was paying attention as McClain was examining Magee on the witness stand. Jackson "gave the gun" to the witness and she felt "nothing but fear." McClain then taped a weapon to the judge's head, then admonished his comrades: "Don't tie them...around the neck...it will hurt them." Apparently, Christmas, a "short man with large eyes," obeyed. As they exited, Jackson exhorted, "We're the new liberation. Take all the pictures you want." They headed to an elevator, and she was said to hear Jackson exclaim, "We want our Soledad Brothers freed," including his older brother, and he kept repeating, she said, "We're the new liberation." They marched outside to a yellow van, headed to an unclear destination and, she said, "Jackson mentioned again that they were the new liberation and that they wanted their Soledad Brothers freed or they would kill the judge." They entered the van and began a "jerky" ride, and "about that time the shooting started." Somehow, the prosecutor got hold of a gun, she said: "I had been shot...my arm suddenly jerked in the air...before [prosecutor Gary] Thomas fell on me and yelled out, 'For God's sake, don't shoot.'" But it was too late for Judge Haley, "laying there with his face blown off." Backtracking, she recalled that in the courtroom "someone had a fistful of dynamite and they said they would blow the place up...someone said, 'Where are we going'" and Jackson said, "to the San Francisco airport."⁴ (G.C. Farrell, a corrections officer at San Quentin, spotted Jonathan Jackson in court the morning before, presumably casing the joint.)⁵

Graham, 45, said that either McClain or Jackson said their destination was the airport, with hostages exchanged for freedom for the Soledad Brothers.⁶ (By June 1971 the Magee Defense Committee stressed that their destination was a radio station: "*the intention*" of the accused "*was to make [a] dramatic gesture to attract public attention to the injustices they were subjected to...call a press conference...they intended to harm no one.*"⁷ [emphasis-original]).

Later a captive juror said that McClain was very considerate and appeared to be in charge. She was very afraid of Jackson and Magee but didn't see anyone in

4. Statement of Maria Elena Graham, 15 April 1971, Reel 5, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS. Readers should note: The defense challenged some of the details presented by these eyewitnesses. Magee was also said to exclaim, "Take lots of pictures. We are the true revolutionaries. Free the Political Prisoners!" Transcript, 5 April 1972, Reel 10.

5. G.C. Farrell to Captain D.R. Weber, 21 August 1970, Reel 5, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

6. Interview with Ms. Graham, 11 and 16 August 1970, Reel 5, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

7. Magee Defense Committee to "Sister Angela," 9 June 1971, Angela Davis File-NPL.

the van shoot.⁸ Surely, she heard gunshots, for according to one account, 200 rounds were fired into the van.⁹

But like many eyewitnesses, her words were subject to challenge by skilled defense counsel. "I have worked so hard to forget the whole thing,"¹⁰ she said, when being examined by Davis's attorney Howard Moore, raising the inference of what she chose to recall—and forget. Thus, defense counsel suggested that the prosecution had implanted the idea that freeing the Soledad Brothers drove the events.

Juror Joyce Rodoni, though admitting that "my mind is kind of slow," recalled that when they reached the van, Thomas suggested releasing the jurors and taking him on the premise, "So long as I'm in the truck, I don't think anybody will shoot." Soon "somebody started shooting and I thought, 'This is the end.'" She did not espy the self-proclaimed Rambo anticipator—Thomas—shooting back furiously, as he said. "I don't even think he had a gun...he was the one that hollered 'stop. You've shot me.'" All the while the judge was complaining about the taped gun at his neck: "It's too tight."¹¹ Yet this key witness had problems that a competent cross-examiner could exploit. As the trial unwound, Dr. Edwin Brennan of Kentfield, Calif., admitted that she was "under my intermittent psychiatric care," as she harbored "intense anxiety" and "morbid ideas," combined with a "fear of tough and angry looking people, particularly 'colored people carrying packages.'"¹²

Juror Doris Wittmer of Mill Valley saw Jackson "jump...up [with] a gun" and hand another to McClain. She said the teenager had a "machine gun" and handed tape to McClain, who taped a shotgun to the judge's head and neck. Magee was "released of his chains," and the "baling wire, heavy wire" was used to tie jurors together. They marched to the van and McClain tried to drive, but the ride was brief and "very erratic and jerky, throwing us around inside." The judge apologized to the jurors. There followed a "few minutes of shooting" with "blood all over the place."¹³

Traffic officer T.E. McGuire was stationed in the vicinity of the iconic Golden Gate Bridge and was able to confirm much of the above—except he spotted a "machine gun" in the hands of the captors—but added, "I heard what sounded like

8. Interview of Graham, 14 September 1970, Reel 5, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS. For more on Magee see *The Black Panther*, 3 October 1970. See also Magee to Davis Counsel John McTemple, 3 July 1970, in Grand Jury Minutes, 10 November 1970, Reel 5: Trying to reach "Soul Sister" Davis; this "very important to her, myself and the public." Transcript, 22 December 1970, Reel 2, Magee: "Documents will show why Angela Davis is innocent."

9. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 21 August 1970.

10. Testimony of Graham, 29 March 1972, Reel 8, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

11. Statement of Joyce Rodoni, 7 August 1970, Reel 5, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

12. Statement by Dr. Brennan, 4 May 1972, Reel 7, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

13. Statement of Doris Wittmer, 15 April 1971, Reel 5, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

three small arm shots.”¹⁴ California highway patrolman Timothy Miller also spotted a “submachine gun” and, becoming aware of the commotion, hurried outside with shotgun in hands. “I got behind a four foot concrete wall,” he said, “they backed the van out of the parking spot and turned south” when “they observed the roadblock by the San Quentin vehicles.... 15 seconds later, shots were fired...one shot from inside of the van blew out one of the rear windows.” He heard prosecutor Thomas screaming, “The son-of-a-bitch shot me in the back. I’m shot in the back.” As for Judge Haley, he noticed the “lower part of his jaw and face had been blown completely off”—but “at no time did I fire the shotgun.”¹⁵ Still, he said, “I hollered ‘ceasefire’ myself... ‘hold your fire.’”¹⁶

The photographer James Kean, at 11:15 a.m., heard “one of the suspects” declaim, “Tell them in the paper that we’re liberating all the Black brothers” or something to this effect. He recalled that recovered on the scene from these working-class intellectuals were books by Daniel Guérin—in French—on anarchism, an article autographed by Professor Davis, and a book entitled *The Politics of Violence*, also autographed by her, and E.H. Carr’s *Studies in Revolution*. The “dynamite” turned out to be highway flares. And there was an identity card from Jackson, giving his residence as 2335 Douglas Street in Pasadena, “dictated by Lt. Teague”—it appears—of the “Juvenile Bureau.”¹⁷ Another photographer, Roger Alan Rockrath—Kean was “my partner,” he said—was confronted by the assailants: “Stand up motherfucker,” he recalled being told. “I set my camera down on the rear of the vehicle and stood up...with my hands above my head.”¹⁸ An assailant “pointed a gun at me,” he said, “turned the pistol 90 [degrees] and...said, ‘Now Motherfucker, march!’”¹⁹

The aforementioned prosecutor, Gary Thomas, was interviewed in the intensive care unit of the Marin County Hospital. In the courtroom he recalled Magee “wanted to wire up all the jurors and blow them up”—how was unclear since the “dynamite” seemed to be highway flares. (Presumably, this was an empty threat.) Outside, the captors compelled Art Wiggins to relinquish his shotgun, then entered a rented yellow van. Magee denounced the judge as “nothing better than the Ku Klux Klan,” while he and his comrades were “revolutionaries.” McClain behind the wheel didn’t know how to “drive the truck”

14. Statement by T.E. McGuire, 7 August 1970, Reel 5, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

15. Statement, Timothy Miller, 7 August 1970, Reel 5, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

16. Testimony of Timothy Miller, 12 April 1972, Reel 10, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

17. Statement from James Kean, 7 August 1970, Reel 5, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS. Same reel, Kean interview, 27 January 1971: He heard the remark “Tell them that we want the Soledad Brothers released by 12:00 o’clock.” See also Dan Terzich, Police Chief of Mill Valley, ca. November 1970, Reel 1: McClain said release the Soledad Brothers by 12:30 or “They’ll all die,” speaking of the hostages. “I was less than 12 feet away from Judge Haley,” but Jackson disarmed him.

18. Statement from Roger Alan Rockrath, 21 January 1971, Reel 5, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

19. Transcript, 6 April 1972, Reel 10, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

so Jackson took over, then he "fired out the window." "[T]here were several shots back," and the teenage driver was "hurt. His hand—there was blood on his hands; and that's when [Magee] blew off Haley's head." Commando-style, Thomas "grabbed the driver's gun and shot him...and I shot McClain, who was now trying to hide," but the prosecutor "shot him in the back...twice.... I turned around and shot [Magee].... all this took place in about ten, fifteen second." Before perishing, Jackson said he wanted to go to the San Francisco airport "and hijack a plane," while Magee "wanted to kill us all." Though hospitalized, Thomas was able to generate sufficient energy to boast, "I shot all of them, until there weren't any more bullets." He stuck to the story involving "four or five" sticks of dynamite.²⁰ Another Rambo anticipator, Eugene Fontaine, the county's Assistant Coroner, rushed to the van and seized a shotgun from Magee.²¹

Weeks after 7 August, Thomas was interrogated and recalled that Magee said, "Kill all the jurors," while McClain "advised Mr. Jackson and Mr. Magee to cool it, that he did not want to kill anyone." Inside the van, Magee took over the shotgun held to the judge's head. Minutes, perhaps seconds later, he was "seeing the entire side of Judge Haley's face just crumbling away," as Magee pulled the trigger. "And you saw that?" he was asked. "Yes, I did."²²

Thomas had been prosecuting McClain as early as June 1970, as he was being charged with assault on an officer of the law and possession of a sharp instrument in a state prison. A hung jury resulted and, as in June, in August McClain was representing himself. Thomas heard his opponent ask Jackson on 7 August, "Did you bring the tape," and he too heard Magee supposedly say, "Let's not take any of them. Let's kill them all here," speaking of the hostages. En route to the van McClain said, "We are revolutionaries but you already knew that...there are more people behind us than you think." The judge then asked, "Where are we going?" McClain replied, "We're going to the airport and take a plane." He too, blamed Magee for slaying the judge. Thomas claimed that he seized a weapon from Jackson's hand and "fired a shot in [his] direction" then "shot" McClain "in the back...and then shot Ruchell Magee in the chest."²³ This occurred at trial during the case-in-chief, and Davis's counsel, Branton, sought to show inconsistencies

20. Statement of Gary Thomas, 8 August 1970, Reel 5, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS. Apparently, Thomas and Magee wound up "in the same ward" of a hospital. A nurse overheard the former saying that when Magee shot Haley "this act infuriated him" and he grabbed McClain's pistol and began shooting. "I got these sons of bitches Lieutenant." D.R. Weber, Correctional Captain, to Lt. Max Luxford, 8 August 1970, Reel 5. See also statement of Gary Thomas, 10 November 1970, Reel 1.

21. Transcript, 10 April 1972, Reel 10, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

22. Interrogatory of Gary Thomas, 4 September 1970, Reel 5, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS. See also testimony of John H. Manwaring, pathologist, date unclear: Haley died of a shotgun blast to the head and another in the chest. See also Report of San Rafael Police Department, 7 August 1970: 10 officer weapons were examined and all have 6 rounds except one who has 5; "none of them had been fired...all were fully loaded. None bore the smell of a recently fired weapon." All in Reel 5.

23. Testimony of Gary Walter Thomas, 5 April 1972, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

between his past and present statements. At this point in the trial, defendant Davis was noted barely—except for Jackson having books from her collection and her associating with him and buying weapons, which were explained as a response to a cascade of threats against her.

In a handwritten statement from August 1970, John Burns of San Rafael—unlike others—“saw a colored woman” with “1 or 2 children in the spectator section” of the courtroom. “She stayed 1 or 1 ½ hours” before departing. “Skin was medium color. Her age was 38 to 40.” McClain “made it very clear that ‘the first shot that is fired at us...the judge will get killed first.’” Just before departing the courtroom, McClain purportedly said, “You people don’t know how much I hate you white people.” He felt that Magee “was fully aware of the plot” all along. “Both McClain and Magee did not seem at all surprised when Jackson came in and suddenly stood up.” Eventually, he saw “a guard laying in the street [and] could be seen shooting,” and a “guard off to the left of the truck [*sic*] was shooting toward [it]” too.²⁴ M.C. Curry, a correctional officer, arrived at the courthouse as the assailants were departing the courtroom and helped to form a roadblock. “Officers fired at the van and I fired two (2) rounds at the driver... .38 caliber rounds” and ultimately escorted Magee to the hospital.²⁵

Subsequently, Joseph Murphy of San Quentin testified that their policy was to prevent an escape of prisoners as a priority—even if the life of hostages were to be placed in jeopardy.²⁶ Thus, John Wesley Matthews claims to having shot Jackson and McClain (others claimed as much too). Then a third target “exposed himself from the rear of the van...and I fired at him...he went down,” he said. All told, he fired four shots from his Winchester rifle, but even after he shouted ceasefire, other shots were fired.²⁷ For John Hicks, of nearby San Quentin, also fired “four to five shots” from his carbine.²⁸ Eugene Lyle Osborne of San Quentin fired his .38 pistol at the van from “45 yards, 50 yards” away. “I was firing at the left front window, which was the driver’s side.”²⁹

Despite their ex post facto heroics, this was hardly a stellar performance by law enforcement. Theodore V. Hughes was disarmed by Jackson—though he was able to hear “loudly, ‘Free our Brothers at Folsom, Free all’” (others heard references to Soledad). Norman R. Johnson was disarmed by Magee.³⁰ Their comrade Harold Pennington heard “twenty, twenty five seconds” of firing but admitted, “I did not fire any shots.”³¹

24. Statement by John Burns, circa August 1970, Reel 5, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

25. M.C. Curry to D.R. Weber, 7 August 1970, Reel 5, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

26. Testimony of Joseph J. Murphy, 11 April 1972, Reel 10, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

27. Testimony of John Wesley Matthews, 11 April 1972, Reel 10, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

28. Testimony of John Hicks, 11 April 1972, Reel 10, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

29. Testimony of Eugene Lyle Osborne, 11 April 1972, Reel 10, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

30. Transcript, 6 April 1972, Reel 10, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

31. Transcript, 10 April 1972, Reel 10, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

Another witness, identified as "Mrs. Clausen" of Mill Valley, recalled that Jackson "wanted to shoot right away. McClain said no"; still, the youngster was "very mean and aggressive all the time," which she connected to the sight of "one woman [who] cried hysterically" all the while.³²

The day before 7 August, Lois Leidig of Portland was in the courtroom and noticed that McClain "seemed to become very repetitious in his questions to the witness. He would look over our heads and to our right for 15-20 seconds before asking the question over again.... when McClain kept looking off and on to the back of the spectator seats, the witness just watched McClain," as if "those anarchists" were involved in a dress rehearsal for tomorrow's performance.³³ However, by the time of the trial in May 1972, Branton exposed her as likely being hostile to the defendant, which could have shaped her perceptions.³⁴ Similarly, coordination between Jackson, McClain, Christmas and Magee was presumed, but there was no evidence of the teenager visiting them in prison.³⁵ Fleeta Drumgo, a comrade of George Jackson in the Soledad Brothers, had a cell adjacent to McClain's, but they never discussed a plot to free the celebrated inmate.³⁶

Thus, Davis's counsel, Leo Branton, theatrically lectured the overmatched prosecutor, Albert Harris: "After seven weeks of trial, 100 witnesses, 200 exhibits and that's all you have. You've proven a hell of a case against Jonathan Jackson."³⁷ Co-counsel Howard Moore reminded the jury and the public that "no members of Miss Davis's race [sat] on this jury,"³⁸ while Branton stressed that no fingerprints of his client were found on either the weapons or vehicles employed

32. Statement of Mrs. Clausen, ca. August 1970, Reel 5, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

33. Lois Leidig to "Dear Barney," 11 January 1971, Reel 5, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

34. Testimony of Leidig, 9 May 1972, Reel 12, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

35. Testimony of Jean Le Van, Coordinator of Records at San Quentin, 9 May 1972, Reel 12, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

36. Testimony, 23 May 1972, Reel 12, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS. When Drumgo was fifteen, he'd had a fight with his stepfather and fired a gun into the ceiling" and was "imprisoned for attempting to commit murder.... prison had aged him [as] the skin under his eyes [grew] puffy, like some old man's." In December 1979, he was "murdered in a gangland style shooting," Prof. Davis terming him a "martyr." See Andrews, *Black Power*, 81, 253.

37. Remarks of Branton, 16 May 1972, Reel 12, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS. Harris was described as "around five feet, eight inches or five feet ten inches, barrel chested, with short arms, and stubby fingers on thick heavy hands. His complexion was florid and his hair grey, streaked with silver, curling crisply. His neck was short and thick and his white button down collars crumpled under his chin and jowls." Timothy, *Jury Woman*, 58. Timothy worked at the Stanford Medical School, was the mother of three adult children—a son, 27, and daughters, 25 and 16—and the spouse of an attorney. Transcript, 13 March 1972, Reel 9.

38. Remarks of Moore, 1 June 1972. As the trial was about to begin Davis attorney, and fellow Communist, Doris Walker, demanded that the jury be dismissed because it did not include wage earners nor students and was unrepresentative: Transcript, 27 March 1972, Reel 9, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

by the deceased accused.³⁹ “No fingerprints of Angela Davis were found on any of the evidence!” exclaimed key juror Mary Timothy”—except a letter.⁴⁰ In any case, the prosecutor seemed overwhelmed by the details he had accumulated, and instead of presenting a sleek narrative, he seemed to dump the contents of his briefcase before the jury: “The jury was dozing off,” said juror Timothy: “he had lost his audience” with his “sonorous monotone. I had actually nodded off for a second or two,” she said sheepishly. Little wonder. Their case, she said, was “repetitious, confusing, and totally unnecessary.”⁴¹ When the prosecutor was able to identify the defendant accurately in the courtroom—“Miss Davis is sitting...behind the counsel table practically against the railing and sitting next to her I think is Mrs. Kendra Alexander”—one half expected the jury to congratulate him mockingly.⁴² By late May 1972 the Davis defense committee was contemptuous of the prosecution: “It took Harris seven weeks, nearly 100 witnesses and 200 exhibits to build his tenuous house-of-cards case.”⁴³ An analyst found that the prosecution strained to prove what Davis was admitting.⁴⁴ In some instances, it seemed that the defense was willing to save the prosecution from itself as they sought to execute yet another evidence dump. “Defense is willing to stipulate,”⁴⁵ said Branton tersely, saving time and, perhaps, winning plaudits from the increasingly bored jury.

Counsel found it strange that photographer Kean somehow lost the note where he was said to have written down what McClain reportedly said on 7 August demanding freedom for the Soledad Brothers. Similarly, why didn’t prosecutor Thomas hear the same, while juror Graham was compromised, they said, by her acknowledgment of ongoing trauma.⁴⁶ (The jury dismissed her eyewitness testimony).⁴⁷ Prosecution conceded that there were no Davis fingerprints in the van but countered by saying that by a certain reading there was only “one fingerprint on the mirror of the van” and “inside the van” there were no

39. Remarks of Branton, 1 June 1972. If it had not been self-indicting, the prosecution could have argued that a sloppy chain of custody explained the lack of fingerprints. Transcript, Testimony of Spiros Vasos, latent fingerprint examiner, 20 April 1972, Reel 11, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

40. Timothy, *Jury Woman*, 139. See also Statement of John Tittle, juror alternate, “a venireman at 20,” ca. 1972, Box 78, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard: He too was impressed that her fingerprints were in van and he also said that he believed that Marvin Stender was driving her to Berkeley when the prosecutor thought otherwise. “She was too smart” to be involved in the 7 August event, he said. Cf. Transcript, 30 May 1972, Reel 12: Prosecution on Marvin Stender.

41. Timothy, *Jury Woman*, 68, 124.

42. Transcript, 3 May 1972, Reel 11, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

43. “Trial Bulletin,” 26 May 1972, Box 44, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard. *People’s World*, 20 May 1972: 8 weeks of trial; 93 witnesses; 200 exhibits.

44. Rashman, *The People v. Angela Davis*, 134.

45. Transcript, 10 April 1972, Reel 10, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

46. Remarks by Defense Counsel, 1 June 1972, Reel 12, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

47. Timothy, *Jury Woman*, 219.

Jackson fingerprints. Did that mean the fact that he was killed inside the van should be dismissed?⁴⁸

Yet hovering like a dark cloud over the trial was a daunting message from the FBI sent to the White House: In the Panther newspaper of 8 August 1970—likely published before the “very day of the crime”—a “cartoon spells out a contemplated kidnapping and release of prisoners”—the cartoon in question was attached.⁴⁹

* * *

By late on the day of 7 August 1970 (and the wee hours of the morning of 8 August) until 13 October Professor Davis was on the lam, as stories of various sort circulated about what exactly happened in San Rafael that led to massive bloodshed.⁵⁰ As duck was hovering one mid-October day 1970, she was arrested at the Howard Johnson motel at 51st Street and 8th Avenue in New York City. She was said to be “wearing a wig” and accompanied by David Rudolph Poindexter. She had identification in the name of Lorean Poindexter and Lorean Robinson—the former, said FBI agent Lawrence J. Moore, was the “deceased wife” of her companion, and the latter was the “maiden name” of the deceased.⁵¹ Fashionably attired in a navy-blue jacket, black turtleneck sweater, black flair pants, blue socks and black loafers, he too declined to answer queries from the FBI. He was listed

48. Prosecution Remarks, 1 June 1972, Reel 12, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

49. FBI memo, 20 August 1970, and *The Black Panther*, 8 August 1970, Box 85, John Dean Papers-RNPL.

50. See e.g., “David Johnson v. Superior Court of California,” “People of California real party in interest,” “Request for stay,” 25 March 1975, Box 101, Thorne Papers: Melvin “Cotton” Smith—recall his role during the L.A. Panther trial—learned of the plot to free George Jackson to be led by James Carr, which was leaked to the authorities. This led to LAPD officers Don Mahoney and Robert Sherritt heading north to Santa Cruz on 6 August in anticipation. Carr was said to have “embezzled large sums of money from Angela Davis and Soledad Brothers Defense funds. Carr was training others for guerrilla warfare at a secret place near Aptos.... Carr was persuaded to feign participation in the plot to free [Jackson]” and “was to be a surprise witness for the prosecution” during the Davis trial.” Allegedly, the CIA “was investigating the suspected of explosives, arms and money [granted] to the [BPP] by the Red Chinese government.” Scandalous informant Louis Tackwood was the “brother-in-law” of Carr. In April 1972 Carr was shot to death in Santa Clara County. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 13 April 1972: There was an attempt to tie the Carr slaying to pro-Davis elements in that he was accused of “siphoning off money collected” for her defense. *People’s World*, 15 April 1972: “Angela’s defense denies Carr link.”

51. Transcript, 10 November 1970, Reel 1, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS. See also *Los Angeles Times*, 14 October 1970: The couple were residing in room 702 of this 10-story structure at 6:02 p.m. They had registered as Mr. and Mrs. George Gilbert in a \$34 a day “blue walled” room with “twin beds.”

as being about 6' tall and almost 180 pounds with "dark complexion, black hair."⁵² Subsequently, Poindexter recounted that the couple had seen a Paul Newman movie just before their detention. He had known her for a decade, he said, and somehow thought she was in Algeria—before he heard from her.⁵³

Robert Loman of Chicago had known Poindexter since the fall of 1969 and knew that his mother, of Hollywood, Florida, had a "good deal of money" and "might be interested in his scavenger business." He also knew that Poindexter was "having marital troubles with his wife," who "reportedly shot and killed herself on May 1, 1970"; then her surviving spouse had an "argument" with Loman by mid-August, and from that point he had neither seen nor heard from him.⁵⁴

Supposedly, Poindexter was to travel with the fugitive academic to Canada from his apartment at 6701 Crandon Avenue in Chicago.⁵⁵ However, Loman said he saw Davis in Chicago on 15 August.⁵⁶ By August 17 Donald Tracy registered the couple in a downtown Detroit hotel and they checked out on 19 August.⁵⁷ In between, on 18 August, a Motown optometrist said that he prepared spectacles for the fugitive using the name Lorraine Poindexter.⁵⁸

The prosecutor admitted that there had been an "international search" for Davis, which may have led to the shredding of focus. Harry Mursten, manager of an apartment complex in Miami, arranged for them to stay there after Poindexter's mother paid the rent.⁵⁹ Patrick George Rogan, a mechanic in Fort Lauderdale, encountered the couple and he too commented on Davis's "spaces in the teeth."⁶⁰ A search of the Miami abode revealed pictures of Davis with her new look, which were then sent to the FBI in New York, leading to the couple's detention by almost a dozen agents. When asked if she wanted a cigarette, Davis was mute. Although she was able to elude the bloodhounds for a few months, from the inception the authorities had some insight into her whereabouts. Apparently, Franklin Alexander had visited a phone booth at a service station near his L.A. residence and called a "David Day," i.e., Poindexter. The authorities seemed to be monitoring both Charlene Mitchell and Mary Lou Patterson—daughter of William Patterson—both thought to be close to Davis. They thought she might travel to Cuba, an inference from her arrival in Miami—and the book uncovered in her residence there, *A Beginning Course in Spanish*. Heading north to Manhattan, they checked into a Holiday Inn on 1 October and checked out the

52. FBI Report, 19 October 1970, Reel 5, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

53. *Chicago Sun-Times*, 28 May 1972, Box 43, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

54. Interview with Robert Loman on 29 September 1970, Reel 5, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

55. Transcript, 10 May 1972, Reel 12, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

56. Transcript, 10 May 1972, Reel 12, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

57. Transcript, 10 May 1972, Reel 12, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

58. Transcript, 10 May 1972, Reel 12, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

59. Transcript, 10 May 1972, Reel 12, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

60. Transcript, 10 May 1972, Reel 12, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

next day. Yet with the deployment of a bevy of agents and dragnet-like surveillance, an associate of Poindexter in Chicago squealed, and the couple were detained.⁶¹

Her attorney in Manhattan discovered a harbinger of her eventual acquittal as he battled against her extradition to California. He found that Black clerks in the court were sympathetic to his much-photographed client, "unprecedented in my experience," he said with enthralment, even as she endured a two-week hunger strike leading to her release from solitary confinement.⁶² Perhaps these clerks read the BPP newspaper, which commanded, "The masses must never allow Angela Davis to be extradited." They added admiringly that while jailed in Manhattan, she "exercises everyday, practices karate stances."⁶³

Davis was locked up at Manhattan's Dickensian "Women's House of Detention," where she found that "at least 95% of all the prisoners were Black and Puerto Rican." Even then, she chose to "raise the demand that prisons in their present form be abolished."⁶⁴ Within hours of her detention, the Young Workers Liberation League—heir to the Young Communist League—called a demonstration, and hundreds materialized.⁶⁵ Within weeks there was a rally in South Los Angeles on her behalf as the cry of "Free Angela!" was heard repeatedly. At this rally, a protester identified as "Sister Cheryl" of UCLA read a statement from the detainee. Already they had an office at 555 N. Western Ave. According to Franklin Alexander, her Che-Lumumba comrade at a time of personal stress, she reminded one and all that "scores of members of the [BPP]

61. Transcript, 27 September 1971, Reel 3, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

62. Abt, *Advocate and Activist*, 276. See also John Abt, "On the Defense of Angela Davis," 22 November 1970, Los Angeles: Unitarian Church, Box 1, Angela Davis Collection-Clairemont. See also Transcript, in the Supreme Court of New York State, Abt and Burnham on behalf of Davis and Jessie Behagen, Superintendent of the Women's House of the Detention, Docket #20042, 3 December 1970, before Hon. Thomas Dickens. Abt mentions that his client was in San Francisco "at the time the kidnapping was committed."

63. *The Black Panther*, 19 December 1970. See also John Thorne to James Baldwin, 17 December 1970, Box 16, Thorne Papers: Davis "even organized a regular class for all the sisters on the floor. George does a thousand push ups and Angela is now up to 30 hand push ups without stopping and 11 fingertip push ups." Cf. Andrews, *Black Power*, 98; Jackson "did a thousand fingertip push-ups a day."

64. Davis to Ericka Huggins, 2 May 1971, Box 51, Bettina Aptheker Papers.

65. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 16 October 1970. Karen Wald to "Comrade Brother Huey," ca. 1970. Reel 45, Black Panther Documents: "Got word of Angela's capture...spend the night and most of the next day in the streets (outside the Women's House of Detention) and in the Federal Courthouse...she looked tired...Poindexter looked angry.... the CP lawyer who was representing her...in NY is very straight and piggish, wouldn't give her a note.... at Harvard a revolutionary women's group blew up the CIA Research Center (Center for International Affairs...) and said it was done in honor of Angela.... a group of BSU students joined the line for a while, then decided they wanted a separate Black demonstration and moved a block away...were convinced to rejoin the main picket line."

have been mutilated and murdered” and that the “death of Jonathan Jackson” was a “deep and crushing blow to me.”⁶⁶

Davis was no stranger in this neighborhood. Many knew that before 7 August she rarely traveled alone, especially at night, because of the proliferation of threats against her, providing context for her contention that she was buying arms for protection. In July, the evening before an interview with *People's World*, she felt compelled to stay overnight in Pasadena when she found that her car was being followed.⁶⁷

Still, it seems that Alexander should have been more alert: In hurrying from L.A., after departing the San Francisco Bay Area, Davis had left her 1959 Rambler, said attorney Moore, “perhaps 50 feet away from the home of Franklin and Kindra [sic] Alexander,” leading to the inference that the authorities would be monitoring phone booths in the vicinity.⁶⁸ “I have reason to believe,” said Moore in January 1972, that there was “electronic surveillance” at the “home of Franklin Alexander...during August '70,” who “lived at 280 East 50th Street.” The FBI knew, he said, of his “telephone call from there to Chicago” on 10 August at “9:04 PM Pacific.” They knew of Poindexter’s call to a “pay phone” in L.A. too, said Moore, no stranger to surveillance given his defense of H. Rap Brown and Cleve Sellers of South Carolina.⁶⁹

After extradition was approved, the trip westward was harrowing. She was taken to McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey. “All of the armed guards were pointing their weapons directly at me,” she said. The “statement that was made by

66. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 13 November 1970. See *People's World*, 21 November 1970: As of this date, the national headquarters of the Davis mass defense was in L.A. They attracted negative attention. See Milt Zaslow to Huey Newton, 29 March 1972, Reel 7, Black Panther Documents: Writing on behalf of the National Peace Action Coalition at 11 N. Vermont in L.A., he said, “Don Freed suggested that I write to you about the scandalous behavior of the Angela Davis Defense Committee down here in connection with the...anti-war demonstration...waging a campaign of gossip, lies and slander, all aimed at sabotaging the action for narrow, political, factional ends.” This letter can also be found in Series 2, Box 42, Newton Foundation.

67. *People's World*, 11 July 1970.

68. Transcript, 20 October 1971, Reel 5, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS. Books seized from the Miami residence included works of Marx and Engels; Howard Selsam; Paul La Fargue; Harry Edwards; A.B. Magil—and Stalin on the National Question. Transcript, 21 October 1971, Reel 4. Same date and reel: Davis reportedly “used three different aliases...Ann Moore...Lorean Poindexter...Mrs. George Gilbert.” They also confiscated her address book which included the names of L.A. personalities such as Ayuko Babu, John Floyd, the Hugh Gordon Bookstore, Tommy Jacquette, John La Rose in London, Michael X in London, Herbert Marcuse, the Reverend Melish, Ed Spriggs and the SNCC office in Atlanta: Address book, 1970, Reel 5. See also *San Diego Union*, 20 August 1970: 1959 Rambler found “in a Black Panther home....[of] Franklin Delano Alexander, 23.” See also *People's World*, 24 October 1970: Kendra and Franklin Alexander subpoenaed by grand jury in Manhattan.

69. Transcript, 31 January 1972, Reel 7, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

President Nixon when he congratulated J. Edgar Hoover for capturing one who engages in terroristic activity" was provocative.⁷⁰

However, Prof. Davis, according to Bettina Aptheker, was "clearly shaken" by the harshness of the indictment, envisioning the death penalty, her anxiety un eased by the perceived "ambiguity" of the CP leadership about the efficacy of 7 August.⁷¹

* * *

The prosecution charged that the Jonathan Jackson plot was motivated to free his brother George, and that the admitted love for this prisoner in turn drove her to cooperate. She had become active in the defense of the Soledad Brothers, which included him, Fleeta Drumgo and John Cluchette, falsely accused of murdering a guard at the prison in question.⁷² Prof. Davis became involved in the case and from there bonded with Jackson and his younger brother. George Jackson said, "I read an article in a small Black tabloid and asked my mother to call her. But Angela didn't even return the call!" That was to change. Yet he denied that she was involved in 7 August: "Angela had nothing to do with it.... there were supposed to be eleven others going with him...he used her guns. He never thought he'd be caught." There were ideological compatibilities between the two, though as with her fondness for Marcuse, it was unlikely to win him many adherents within the CP: "I'm a Maoist, Marxist, Leninist and every time I open my mouth, that's who falls out." Further, he added, "I believe in Marx and Lenin and Nkrumah. I believe in Sekou Touré and Mao...I believe in Castro." He added provocatively, "Communism was the feeling, my sense of the fear response to it created in the people in this country that I hated." Yet Jackson's attraction to the ancestral homeland encompassed forces that too would have raised eyebrows among CP cadre. "I wanted to go to Angola...to go with Holden Roberto" (later tied to the CIA).

There were parallels between the journeys of Jackson and Cleaver, though the former subsequently became critical of the latter. "Jackson picks up where Cleaver left off," said one analyst. Born in 1941—roughly three years before Davis—he entered the prison at Chino by February 1961, before being slain in August 1971 during the midst of her trial. Jackson was also cited for the proposition that there should be a "small cadre within the vanguard" and the

70. Transcript, 21 July 1971, Reel 3, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

71. Bettina Aptheker to Mickie Lima, 19 November 1970, Angela Davis File-NPL.

72. See \$70 check from Davis to their Defense Committee, 23 May 1970, Reel 5, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS. Cluchette, the proletarian, had toiled as a mechanic with "the North American Aviation Company": Ouagadougou, *Black Guerrilla Family*, 167.

"each one of their violent actions should be spectacular,"⁷³ and certainly, 7 August filled that bill. "I sent him in there," the elder Jackson said of his younger brother: "I am so proud."⁷⁴ For he detected the "electric" impact of 7 August, inspiring hundreds of inmates. The "reason for the recent success," he added shrewdly, "is due to the outside support and the attention that revolutionary circles are giving men in prison." Ideologically, "the Blacks have recently veered away from the Muslim [theology]," or as reflected semantically, "it's gone from just 'brother' to 'comrade.'"⁷⁵

However, he may have provided his younger sibling a misestimation of the correlation of forces, for he told him that "as long as you keep the hostage alive it can be assumed that the pigs are going to have some regard for life and you should be able to walk him right down to Chile along the Intercontinental Highway."⁷⁶ Instead they opened fire, apparently consistent with policy. Still, in the prelude to his tragic slaying in August 1971, Jackson was requesting, said his attorney John Thorne, "Che Guevara's book on guerrilla warfare" along with "right wing guerrilla manuals."⁷⁷

Assuming the accuracy of the above, the elder Jackson had made an implicit calculation, based on his previous estimate, that fascism was nigh—hence, a "spectacular" action would be needed to free him. But months after his tragic slaying in August 1971, Thorne told his father, Lester Jackson, that fellow Soledad brothers Fleeta Drumgo and John Cluchette were acquitted: "No question," said the counsel, "but that George would have been acquitted just as quickly."⁷⁸

The news arrived too late for the Jackson brothers, the younger being extraordinarily precocious. In the annals of youth history—at least on this continent—it is unlikely there has been a student publication like the younger's *Iskra*, homage in name to Lenin and his similarly talented comrade, Georgi Plekhanov. This high school newspaper in Pasadena assailed faculty, the

73. Gregory Armstrong, *The Dragon Has Come*: New York: Harper & Row, 1974, 35, 185, 101, 79, 182, 173. As noted below, a number of Davis backers were highly critical of the author and his work. The author adds about Cluchette: He had "fingernails...almost an inch and a half long, like the fingernails of a Chinese courtesan." See also Attorney Garfield Steward, San Francisco, to Leonard Carter, 30 January 1970, Carton 27, NAACP Papers-UCB; Doris Maxwell of East Compton, mother of Cluchette, says of her son, "He is about 6' tall and weight 210 [pounds]." On Angola and Roberto, see Gerald Horne, *White Supremacy Confronted*, passim.

74. Eric Cummins, *The Rise and Fall of California's Radical Prison Movement*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994, 183.

75. *The Black Panther*, 17 October 1970.

76. *The Black Panther*, 17 October 1970.

77. John Thorne to Joan Hammer, 9 February 1971, Box 101, Thorne Papers.

78. John Thorne to Lester Jackson, 11 May 1972, Box 101, Thorne Papers. Jackson was reached at 2836 Francis St. #5 in Los Angeles 90005. See also Message from Fleeta Drumgo, 27 August 1971, Reel 30, Black Panther Documents: Does "Comrade H [Newton presumably] consider us a part of the Party...if I have to go it alone then this is what I'll do. Comrade G once said that we're together but we'll die separate. That has a deep meaning." Newton to Drumgo, 20 December 1971, same reel: "Our beloved Field Marshal...Comrade George Jackson, was my hero."

"Pasadena Red Squad," and Gov. Reagan alike. Months before being slain in Marin County, he marked the "first anniversary of the Pasadena High School 'riot,'" characterized by denigrators as when "bands of screaming Negroes" "roamed the halls" of the school, "beating teachers and burning valuable property."⁷⁹ Showing utter disrespect for the hallowed founding of the nation in which he resided, weeks before his demise, with biliousness flowing, he proclaimed the fraudulence of the breast-beating republic: "this is the era and has been for 190 years"; but he was not paralyzed with indecision. "This voracious monster must be stopped," for he had "personal experience with system repression. My brother is in his tenth year of a prison term," he stressed, "on a charge of *second degree robbery*." Yes, "people have said that I am obsessed with my brother's case and the Movement in general," and, yes, "I don't laugh very much any more,"⁸⁰ an embossment of his sheer seriousness driven by his dutiful concern for his older brother.⁸¹

Roughly a year before 7 August, the elder Jackson told their sister that "perhaps you tease Jon too much, he doesn't express himself too well and consequently cannot return on the little innuendoes, this is damaging to his confidence. We are building him, as we will your son, not attempting to destroy him."⁸²

The entire family was affected by what befell George Jackson. His mother, speaking at a church in the spring of 1970, recounted with anguish how her son was jailed in 1960 for 2nd degree robbery, and while at San Quentin, "They accused him of starting strikes," and so on "January 6th, 1969, my son was moved...to Soledad."⁸³ The Jacksons' father recounted how the elder son had said, days before his death, that there was a plot to kill him, but he dismissed this. He added that "no set of parents could have been more bourgeois than my wife Georgia and I were then," while residing in Chicago as "all of them," meaning their children, "went to parochial schools." But then he transferred to work in the Post Office of Pasadena. After his son's imprisonment, "We'd all drive up at least twice every month to Tracy or Soledad or San Quentin." He found Davis to be "down to earth," and she "even slept at our house...she did a considerable amount

79. *Iskra*, 1 April 1970, Box 101, Thorne Papers.

80. *Iskra*, 18 June 1970, Box 101, Thorne Papers. For more on Jonathan Jackson, see *The Black Panther*, 15 August 1970.

81. See e.g., Thorne to Bob Regli, n.d., Box 101, Thorne Papers. Apparently, the elder Jackson was implicated in an L.A. robbery insofar as the getaway car was traced to him. Yet the transcript of his plea hearing was destroyed prematurely, compromising appeals. In the same box, see also on this prisoner: He was lying in bed "fully clothed with a woman...knocked out on drugs...reds and such things...door suddenly broke open and in came the police [who] took him on the back porch and really worked him over hard."

82. George Jackson to Dear Penny, 6 June 1969, Reel 37, Black Panther Documents.

83. *The Black Panther*, 2 May 1970.

of reading...she took her turn with household chores.... Jon...influenced Angela—not the other way around.”⁸⁴

Soledad seemed to be constructed as the harshest option for Black Angelenos—or at least thought the BPP by August 1970: “There’s now 15 brothers from Los Angeles County who are being held in [the] hole in the old wing of Soledad...given no change of clothing, no shoes” and “no exercise.”⁸⁵ The resolute Jackson was a “magnetic, tender man,” said the journalist Karen Wald, eventually exiled in Cuba. He “studies, works hard and writes 21 hours a day.”⁸⁶

Davis, who worked as hard as Jackson, became attracted to him—and vice versa—as she became a tireless worker for the Soledad Brothers and Jackson. After moving into an apartment in July 1970, she was said to work 7 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. five days per week.⁸⁷ (Shortly after 7 August, an FBI agent entered her apartment at 164½ 35th Street, consisting of three rooms, described as a “sleeping room in the front facing the street...a living room...a kitchen.”⁸⁸ Seized from this “light colored frame building” were correspondence and photographs.⁸⁹)

Early on the elder Jackson “saw and read about Angela Davis and some other females of our kind,” leaving him suitably impressed. Her presence meant that it was “possible that this country has produced some females like those of Cuba or Vietnam,” the highest of compliments.⁹⁰ By May 1970 he told his sister, “I sure dig A.D. Love her, love her. Be sure to drop her a hint now and then to that effect; when the war is brought to a successful conclusion, she’ll be my number one [sic] wife [sic]” as she is a “wonderful woman,”⁹¹ “who by some strange of twist [of] history rose above her environment.”⁹²

At the same time, what made Jackson dangerous to the fortunes of U.S. imperialism was that he was a political *cum* intellectual lodestar for Black inmates then overflowing in prison cells, while maintaining ties to Communists—and not just Davis. Before his slaying, he had become closer to the Communist scholar,

844. Undated article re: Jackson, Carton 56, NAACP Papers-UCB.

855. *The Black Panther*, 29 August 1970.

866. *The Black Panther*, 25 June 1970.

877. Testimony of Otelia Young, 25 April 1972, Reel 11, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS. Young, said juror Timothy, was outfitted in “clothes” that were old and ill-fitting, her shoes worn...[she] smiled” at Davis. Timothy, *Jury Woman*, 146. Affidavit of 18 August 1970 in Grand Jury Minutes, 10 November 1970, Reel 5: Ruth Lambert “has seen Davis many times” at the site with the address given as 162½ East 35th Street.

888. Transcript, 20 April 1972, Reel 11, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

899. Transcript, 10 November 1970, Grand Jury Minutes; Affidavit from U.S. District Court of 25 August 1970, Reel 5, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

900. Jackson, *Soledad Brother*, 275. Karen Wald to Newton, ca. 1970, Reel 45, Black Panther Documents: “I spoke to Van Ba, the head of the NLF-PRG Embassy in Havana on the phone...he sent greetings to you.”

911. George Jackson to “Dear Penny,” 15 May 1970, Reel 37, Black Panther Documents.

922. George Jackson to “Dear Penny,” 15 May 1970, Series 2, Box 44, Newton Foundation.

Herbert Aptheker⁹³—father of Bettina—and what was driving this liaison in part was the unforgiving climate in prisons. “There are Nazi pseudo intellectuals all around us on the tier. In our very heated debates they constantly refer to Jewish plots and counterplots...one suggested that I read the ‘Protocols of the Elders of Zion,’” a notorious anti-Jewish screed positing a global conspiracy for domination. He was also seeking succor. “Why did Gus Hall,” top CP leader, “defame my brother? Could he have simply refrained from any comment at all if he didn’t agree. Did support of Angela hinge upon a denial of my brother? If so, it’s alright—support Angela!! I must defend Jon tho.”⁹⁴

Aptheker responded by sending him books and lamenting the “insult to your brother,” the “result” of Hall “being deliberately misinformed” as to 7 August. “I was in California then and immediately wrote an entirely different assessment,” equating the younger Jackson as the equivalent of “Nat Turner and Denmark Vesey and Gabriel Prosser,” weighty coming from a premier historian of slave revolts. Yet reflective of the internal rift in the CP, “publication of that piece by me was refused; it still has not been published.” He had won over Hall to a “different and correct position now.”⁹⁵

In sum, the rift that led Professor Davis to resign from the CP two decades later was prefigured while she was still in prison.

As the clock ticked, counting off the days before his tragic demise, he and “Herbert” were communicating regularly. “We have much to discuss my friend,” said the inmate, as he was now studying “Primitive Communism” and “Communal African formations.”⁹⁶ “I don’t think I am rigid,” said Aptheker defensively at one point, as he went on to provide instructions on class struggle and the Black working class.⁹⁷

Weeks before his death in August, Jackson prefigured such by telling Aptheker about a recent court appearance. A “whole convoy of gunmen around us,” were outfitted with “tommy guns”—and unmissable were the “helicopters” which whirled above. By the way, he asked, what is your opinion of “foco” theory, a Jackson—and Panther—preoccupation, i.e., the notion that a small group could ignite a revolutionary wildfire.⁹⁸ For whatever reason, the historian did not respond to this latter important point, but he did chat amiably about other matters especially the struggle for socialism.⁹⁹ Jackson admitted that he “expected from the beginning to place myself completely in the hands of the anarchists

93. Cf. “The Political Thought” of George Jackson, post-August 1971, Vertical File-George Jackson, Freedom Archives-Berkeley; Critiques CP and idea that de facto “white workers” will lead the revolutionary struggle; stresses revolutionary potential of African-Americans.

94. George Jackson to Aptheker, 15 April 1971, Series 2, Box 44, Newton Foundation.

95. Aptheker to Jackson, 21 April 1971, Series 2, Box 44, Newton Foundation.

96. Jackson to Aptheker, 25 April 1971, Series 2, Box 44, Newton Foundation.

97. Aptheker to Jackson, 29 April 1971, Series 2, Box 44, Newton Foundation.

98. Jackson to Aptheker, 11 June 1971, Series 2, Box 44, Newton Foundation.

99. Aptheker to Jackson, 18 June 1971, Series 2, Box 44, Newton Foundation.

Democratic centralism is anathema," he said, speaking of the Communist approach of robust debate, then the body following the will of the majority.¹⁰⁰

As the above suggests, the elder Jackson had a heterogeneous array of ideas. Though he was to break with the Algiers exile when he conflicted with Newton and the Oakland leadership, seemingly he was in accord with Cleaver on the prioritizing of armed struggle. Assuredly, he was sympathetic to Cleaver's analysis of the lumpen, which as of late December 1970 was congruent with mainstream Panther thinking.¹⁰¹

But he was also sympathetic to Havana. "I was in Soledad when the Cuban Revolution" unwound, and "what I noticed was that the Cuban situation upset the authoritarian types" and "I started reading," a habit that became obsessional with him; for "if they felt it was harmful and detrimental to them, then it just might possibly be good for me."¹⁰²

The elder Jackson was also in sync with the BPP in his support for Prof. Davis. In the midst of her trial, the party organ proclaimed that "Sister Angela is not unknown to us" though she was "no longer an official member of our party...she was in fact the head of the Bobby Seale Defense Committee in Los Angeles." Thus, at that juncture, the BPP stood "behind Angela." Such was the full-page message¹⁰³ symbolized in the party initiating the "Angela Davis Free Food Program" (alongside the "George Jackson Free Clinic") both in Oakland.¹⁰⁴ (There was also a party sponsored "Angela Davis Daycare Center" in High Point, N.C.¹⁰⁵) Davis asserted that she "worked on a day-to-day basis with the Los Angeles chapter of the Black Panther Party," alongside Ericka Huggins, whose "leadership was critical."¹⁰⁶ Even in the midst of her trial, where her life was at risk, she raised the cases of Huggins and Seale, while giving prominence to Black scholar Mary Frances Berry by citing her for substantiation.¹⁰⁷ About six months before her acquittal, Davis continued to commiserate with "Dearest Ericka" ("this jail is the most jail-like I've seen yet. Everything grey and sealed off...clanging and ringing...buzzing of electric doors.")¹⁰⁸

100. Jackson to Aptheker, 22 July 1971, Series 2, Box 44, Newton Foundation.

101. *The Black Panther*, 16 January 1971: Jackson endorses Cleaver's lumpen analysis. For the latter, see *The Black Panther*, 2 January 1971: "The stomp down Black lumpen proletariat is the backbone" of the party, and "without this backbone, the party would only be a reflection of one of those mother country debating societies that take Marx and Lenin for their text.... [we] cannot relate to the category of the Working Class...the Working Class is part of the problem."

102. *The Black Panther*, 17 October 1970: Excerpted from the *San Francisco Wildcat*.

103. *The Black Panther*, 13 March 1971.

104. *The Black Panther*, 25 September 1971. Cf. *The Black Panther*, 19 August 1972: Seale denounces "phony Sickie Cell group" in L.A.

105. *The Black Panther*, 29 January 1972.

106. Attachment of Davis remarks to undated Ericka Huggins to Seale and Newton, ca. 1972, Series 2, Box 44, Newton Foundation.

107. Transcript, 12 January 1972, Reel 7, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

108. Davis to Huggins, 3 December 1971, Box 51, Bettina Aptheker Papers.

The party denigrated the "White-on-white jury for Angela" and the theory of the prosecution too, recalling how the "Pigs stole these letters from Comrade George's personal belongings in his prison cell after they murdered him" since "the fascists wish to build a cheap 'True Confessions' version of the relationship.... their argument is that she was so much in love...with Comrade George she would have done 'anything' to 'please him.'"¹⁰⁹

The elder Jackson articulated what had become evident about his close comrade: "This extraordinary Black woman that I hold in the greatest of esteem...whom I and we are forced to love in a very, very special way." He hailed "the great sacrifices this beautiful sister has had in speaking for me," along with her "attempting to inject new life into the Amerikan Communist Party with the explosive doctrines of Black liberation," for "when certain members of her party attacked Comrade Jonathan Jackson of the [BPP] for the 'practice' of his beliefs, Angela attacked them" and "they have heaped criticism back on her in turn." Hence, he said, "I do not think it fair that she should receive criticism from her own party and the new vanguard also." He was grateful that she "assails me with questions honestly," sharpening his own thinking. Thus, "the insecure and possibly counter-revolutionary elements of the ACP (Amerikan Communist Party) represent Angela no more than do the Tabor couple and R.D. (Richard Dhoruba [Moore]) represent [Newton]"—and with a final flourish he revealed what side he was on by taking a swipe at Cleaver.¹¹⁰ Yet despite this slap at the ostensible concretizing of armed struggle, Jackson, as was his wont after a lengthy uplifting of the virtues of "discipline" with appropriate citations to Mao and Fanon, ended with his usual signature: "war to the knife."¹¹¹ (Like many, Jackson was quite taken with Fanon and Algeria.)¹¹²

Still, he contended, "I felt that Comrade Cleaver was wrong," actually "almost insane" and—unforgivable in his moral calculus—exhibiting "a sign of total lack of discipline...bordering on madness." Moreover, the "charges coming out of Algiers are ridiculous." He did not flinch in backing Hilliard, a target of Cleaver: He "deserves applause" in that "he put our whole case together," speaking of the Soledad Brothers, and was essential in "creating the prisoners' movement"—the "charges leveled against him are ridiculous."¹¹³

Remarkably, despite being incarcerated, the comrades were robust in their criticisms, unafraid to run the risk of alienating the sensitive. Davis was firm in choosing to "reject" the elder Jackson's "conclusions; namely the uncontested victory of the counter-revolution...no doubt we are headed in a fascist direction,"

109. *The Black Panther*, 20 November 1971.

110. *The Black Panther*, 13 March 1971.

111. *The Black Panther*, 27 March 1971.

112. Jackson to Penelope Jackson, 5 November 1969, Series 2, Box 44, Newton Foundation.

113. *The Black Panther*, 3 April 1971.

but she did “not think that fascism has yet consolidated itself,”¹¹⁴ which was likely accurate at that moment. However, given this latter point, was armed struggle mandatory, or was it necessary to press to expand democratic space to the fullest extent?¹¹⁵ Perhaps she had not taken into account the axiom that fascism inheres in advanced capitalism.

“Angela and I have some pretty heated debates over the existence of a mature corporativism,” he informed their mutual friend, Herbert Aptheker. “I say yes of course,” concerning fascism’s reality, while “she—and probably you say no...she seems to accept the disguised form in which it was foisted upon us as the reality. She speaks of the emergence of fascist rule as welfare state-ism[,] the ‘New Deal.’” Sounding frustrated and flustered, Jackson argued, “I don’t [k]now why people who love each other and hate hierarchy also find so much to debate over. It’s stimulating to a point then it tends to retard action,”¹¹⁶ likely accurate. In court in January 1971 the defendant warned of a plunge into the “thro[e]s of fascism,” if she were not allowed to represent herself, as voices from the audience proclaimed in unison, “Right on, right on.”¹¹⁷

This analysis of fascism was a Jackson trademark, and this led him to the conclusion that “armed struggle, organized violence, is the natural outcome of a sequence of historical events that have matured to impasse,” he enunciated in early 1971. This was the “quintessence of the international fascist counter-revolution!” Thus, as to U.S. fascism, “it not only exists,” he maintained stoutly, “but has developed to its highest point in the USA”—such was the conclusion of this self-described “Marxist-Leninist-Maoist-Fanonist.”¹¹⁸

Davis’s collective—the Che-Lumumba Club—assailed Cleaver’s “muddled ideas” and his “slandorous attack” on the CP, and his notion that “revolutionary violence” is the central issue. “We reject Cleaver’s contention that armed struggle is the single most important issue of the day.” At the same time—as they must—they hailed revolts of the enslaved stretching back to 1526, adding, “no one can deny that [fascism] brazenly asserts itself behind prison walls,” and assailing the wider movement for not knowing this. Yet the casual analyst might have concluded that they were splitting hairs: respectful toward “revolutionary violence” on 7 August and dismissing it in the abstract as sketched by Cleaver.¹¹⁹ And how should comrades evaluate Roger Holder and Catherine Kerkow, who

¹¹⁴ *The Black Panther*, 22 May 1971. See also George Jackson reprint from the *Black Scholar* in *The Black Panther*, 24 July 1971. See also Ruchell Magee on 7 August in the same journal, 9 August 1971.

¹¹⁵ Cf. *The Black Panther*, 8 January 1972: Jackson on fascism.

¹¹⁶ Jackson to Herbert Aptheker, 22 July 1971, Series 2, Box 44, Newton Foundation.

¹¹⁷ Transcript, 5 January 1971, Reel 2, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

¹¹⁸ George Jackson to Thorne, 15 February 1971, Box 12, Thorne Papers. See also Stokely Carmichael to “Dear John,” 20 October 1970, Box 1265, Random House Records-Columbia University (abbrev. Random House Records): He stresses, “LOOK OUT FOR FASCISM: NIXON IS ON THE RISE.”

¹¹⁹ Statement by Che-Lumumba Club, 19 February 1971, Box 153, CPUSA Records-NYU.

executed what was billed as the “longest hijacking in history,” landing in Algiers from the U.S.—along with \$500,000—propelled by a demand that Professor Davis be freed?¹²⁰ (By October 1971 there were rumors of a plot to kidnap public officials and hold them hostage in exchange for Davis’s release, that evidently were taken seriously in Sacramento, if not Washington.¹²¹)

Ineluctably, Jackson was shaped by prison: The draconian maltreatment there likely infused his analysis of the imminence of fascism. On the other hand, it helped to form his sunny view of the lumpen and his undying belief in Black Solidarity. Paradoxically, the influx of Panthers into prisons helped to transform prisoner consciousness in a manner consistent with the revolutionary upsurge globally—and Jackson was the living symbol of this. “We need a cadre,” he insisted, “we see ourselves as performing that function,” meaning the Panthers—meaning those like himself and his now deceased younger brother. “I’ve been a member since Comrade Newton appointed me...a couple of years ago...Jonathan was very definitely a member,” and “most of the brothers here identify with the party.”¹²² In fact, he said, his younger brother was “head of the clandestine army which saw [the BPP] as its political leader.” (He may have participated in a guerrilla training camp in the hills of Santa Cruz.¹²³ To that point, the conservative press pointed out that San Rafael was the “first attempt” in the U.S. to “execute the kind of kidnapping...all too familiar as a guerrilla tactic in Latin America.”¹²⁴ Likewise, Huey Newton, in a broadcast on Pacifica Radio in Berkeley, termed San Rafael “revolutionary...colossal...more important than Watts or Detroit.”¹²⁵)

And his party also identified with an incarcerated Davis. Yet this was contradictory in certain senses and likely unsustainable, not only because of the differences over the estimate of impending fascism, which in turn could have elicited differences on the need for armed struggle. It was also refracted in their clashing estimate of the international situation. At a time—as shall be seen—when

120. Gifford, *Revolution or Death*, 224-225. See also Brendan Koerner, *The Skies Belong to Us: Love and Terror in the Golden Age of Hijacking*, New York: Crown, 2013. Cf. *San Francisco Examiner*, 29 January 1971, Reel 7, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS: First class passenger on TWU Boeing 707 Los Angeles-New York City flight demands “\$300,000, a flight to Europe and freedom for Angela Davis and a prisoner in a Dallas jail...tentatively identified as Garrett Brock Trapnell, 32, of Miami.”

121. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 7 October 1971.

122. *The Black Panther*, 3 April 1971. The youthful Jackson had the indomitability of a Panther. James Jordan, who knew him and Davis, was once angry that, at a film benefit for the Soledad Brothers, “half the money was going to be kept by the theatre owners.... fists clenched, teeth gritted he insisted that we make a demand for all the money.... Angela who was the calmest person present was the only one who was able to soothe Jackson”: Report by Jordan, 24 April 1972, Box 45, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

123. Report, 1972, Box 46, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

124. *San Diego Union*, 19 August 1970, Box 246, Chancellor Subject Files.

125. *San Diego Tribune*, 12 August 1970, Box 246, Chancellor Subject Files. See also Interview with Newton by Liberation News Service, 21 August 1970, Reel 15, Black Panther Documents: “The March courthouse event, a colossal event...indication of what might happen in the future...few more weeks...our embassy opens in Algiers.”

the Soviet Union and its allies were weighing in heavily in favor of freedom for Prof. Davis, the Panthers (Newton and Cleaver alike) were highly critical of these same forces. Thus, when Bangladesh surged to independence, the BPP, in thrall to China, sided with their ally, Pakistan—and against the interests of India, since it was allied with “Soviet Social Imperialists,” a term often invoked, rarely defined. This was a page 1 story, accompanied by photos of Soviet leaders and India’s Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, yet another ally of Moscow.¹²⁶ Perhaps the BPP never contemplated the downstream consequences of their pro-China line—not only in South Asia but also in Southern Africa, not to mention raising sweeping questions about them in Havana. This ideological stance may have been an unavoidable structural matter flowing from the party being a halfway house between Black Nationalism and Socialism, with the former tipping them in the direction of “colored” China and against “white” Moscow. George Jackson was highly praiseworthy of China and Mao Zedong: “his enemies are also my enemy,” while months before 7 August he was evaluating “Jon’s chances for pulling a Mao or a Castro or Holden Roberto,”¹²⁷ later unveiled as a CIA asset.

Nevertheless, there was a kind of “Oakland Spring” for a while with Davis and the Panthers, including Elaine Brown,¹²⁸ sharing bonhomie. Said Newton early on, after she had been seized in October 1970, she was a “scapegoat,” thus “rise up and do whatever is necessary to free Angela Davis” who “exemplified the highest expression of concern for the people.” “[W]e must not fail her.”¹²⁹ “[We] have been friends for quite a number of years,” said the academic to Brown: “I can remember our work in Los Angeles” when “we were so very young and innocent,” less than five years earlier. Said Brown, “you came and almost [[launched] a woman sit-in at Sybil Brand Jail [in the Southland], waiting to get Ericka [Huggins] out of there” in the wake of the slaying of her spouse at UCLA. “Yes, Brown agreed, Davis “work[ed] the hardest to free her.” Replied Davis, “You, Ericka[,] and I have gone through a great deal together.” Reflecting Panther influence, the academic said, “we have to reevaluate what has traditionally been called the lumpen proletariat” even though there was a “tendency” to “romanticize” the lumpen, as “the vanguard of the revolution.” She then built a bridge raising the issue of longtime prisoner Wesley Robert Wells, whose case was first touted by the CP-oriented Civil Rights Congress and William Patterson, then adopted by the BPP: “We have to struggle around Brother Wells’ case,” she insisted, then launched another pontoon, by reminding that “Du Bois was writing

¹²⁶ *The Black Panther*, 5 February 1972.

¹²⁷ George Jackson to Penelope Jackson, 1 October 1969, Series 2, Box 44, *Newton Foundation*. See also Jackson, *Soledad Brother*, 165: Julius Nyerere, founder of modern Tanzania, is termed an “enlightened and intelligent leader who identified with the Eastern world,” likely a reference to his close ties to China.

¹²⁸ FBI Report, 12 November 1969, Los Angeles, Reel 17, *Black Panther Documents*: “Angela Davis gave a speech here... Elaine Brown gave a speech and sang... we had a lot of Feds there.”

¹²⁹ *The Black Panther*, 17 October 1970.

about the need to go into the prisons," speaking of the late Communist recommending a path then being pursued by the BPP.¹³⁰ Perhaps Davis had read the party organ of a week earlier, which informed their readers, "Lest we forget the man who founded the NAACP[,] became a Communist and fled to Africa to die."¹³¹

Asked about the recent entente between the U.S. and China, Davis tactfully punted. "Hard for me at this point to make any firm statement," she said, since "I couldn't even get a subscription to a newspaper when I was in jail"—she was then out on bail. She shifted to a denunciation of their mutual foe, Cleaver, whose "vision was completely distorted," and implicitly Karenga too in that "Black people...from the very beginning, recognized the fallacy of nationalism as an ideology (because nationalism isn't an ideology)." They "saw the Black Power Movement as being a regressive movement in revolutionary development. In actuality, however, it became a progressive stage"—said the Hegelian dialectician—"in the sense that we learned that, first of all, we had to develop a greater unity among ourselves" and "we transcended the nationalist era." The purblind Cleaver could not see this and "began to talk a lot of nonsense."¹³²

Prof. Davis and the BPP appeared to find further common ground in other areas. Davis reprimanded the feminist movement, or at least a wing of it, since "they see the struggle as being one between males and females," which both rejected: "the fact that women's oppression today originates from the capitalist system is frequently lost from view." Brown replied in presumed correction, "It is not entirely true that white women have had no relationship to the process of production." Pointedly, Davis did not recommend the popular work by Howard University's E. Franklin Frazier on the Black family.¹³³

But Davis's attempt to evade the China Question was insufficient for a writer in the BPP organ, though the headline "Has China betrayed the 'revolution'?" was at least rhetorical evidence that second and third thoughts were possible about the party's strategic line.¹³⁴ But the lengthy coverage of the sizable Panther delegation to China led by Hewitt and Emory Douglas was the blunt response to this provocative query.¹³⁵

Davis's positive relations with the BPP stemmed from the untrammelled solidarity she received from the man she called "Comrade Huey." He had

130. *The Black Panther*, 4 March 1972.

131. *The Black Panther*, 26 February 1972. See also Davis to Huggins, 2 May 1971, Box 51, Bettina Aptheker Papers: "Dearest Ericka, Sister, Comrade...over two years since our last meeting...these agonizing hours we were stationed in parking lots outside Syb[il] Brand, anxiously awaiting your release from jail.

132. *The Black Panther*, 11 March 1972.

133. *The Black Panther*, 11 March 1972. Cf. Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1986 on, inter alia, pre-capitalist roots of male supremacy.

134. *The Black Panther*, 15 April 1972.

135. *The Black Panther*, 22 April 1972.

attempted to visit her at the Marin County jail in April 1971 but was blocked by what she called "bureaucracy." She too was unmoved by the "reverberations" recently unbridled by the latest Cleaver antics. She reassured him that—contrary to scuttlebutt—she and her co-defendant Magee were not at odds: "On each occasion when the brothers and sisters in court have shouted 'Free Angela 'I have always responded with 'Free Ruchell.'" She added, "I am in full agreement with you that I should make some gesture of solidarity which will reach the people at the earliest possible occasion...particularly important at this point because of our disagreement on the issue of legal strategy." Magee was determined to remove the case to federal court, and her team was just as determined to say in the state court. Yes, Magee was "angered by my lawyers who, he feels, are trying to mislead me. But between us, there is no rift," though admittedly there was "heated discussion between [her lawyers] Margaret Burnham [and] Sheldon Otis" squaring off against Magee's "court appointed attorney [Robert] Carrow." Repeatedly and tactfully, she said, "[I] wholeheartedly agree with you," and yes, "the courtroom very definitely should become a classroom.... I feel I have to follow your example." She offered to write for the party paper "on whatever topic you might suggest," such as an "open letter to Ericka [Huggins]. She is definitely one of the strongest, most beautiful revolutionary women" and widow of BPP martyr John Huggins of the UCLA tragedy of January 1969. She recounted once more her role in bailing her out of jail just "after John and Bunchy were assassinated. She was stronger than us all" on that gloomy day, punctuated by steady rain.¹³⁶

That precipitation was a premonition of a subsequent storm that gathered intensity even before Davis's acquittal, and accelerated thereafter. After a protracted battle, Davis was able to broker a bail agreement. But as a rarefied celebrity—and criminal defendant still—she felt that the BPP had placed her in jeopardy by advertising her appearance at their event. Huggins told Newton and Seale that "it is my belief that Angela is not given much ability to make objective decisions," for she "went to her trial on April 13, 1972...talked to her roughly 3 minutes" and there the defendant also vetoed a joint book proposal that had been bruited. "She looked confused, guilty and, of course, Communist Party members...were surrounding her."¹³⁷

Then Huggins reported in more detail to the "Servant," Newton's self-descriptor, on the "contradictions" between the CP and BPP. The site was the Berkeley residence of the defendant's attorney, Sheldon Otis. "She stated that she

136. Angela Davis to Huey Newton, 3 April 1971, Series 2, Box 41, Newton Foundation. See also Transcript, 5 January 1971, Reel 2, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS: Magee was quite sensitive about the point noted in court that his IQ was 75. On this day, he complained that his attorney "Mr. [Leonard] Bjorklund is talking me into the gas chamber." Then he turned to Davis and said: "I have concrete evidence you are innocent. That is what I want to do, is present it. The shysters will not present it." Davis's counsel, Howard Moore, exhorted, "Right on." Then Magee was ousted from the courtroom and Davis's other counsel, Michael Tigar, objected to his absence.

137. Huggins to Seale and Newton, n.d., Series 2, Box 44, Newton Foundation.

did not understand the party's [BPP] political direction," though Huggins raised the ticklish matter of the sister of Davis—Fania Davis Jordan's—"attack on the [BPP] when she held a press conference in Memphis." Striding away from the earlier bonhomie, she portrayed the defendant as "naïve" and the "reasons for this are her intellectual detachment and the attempts of the Communist Party to block her from certain aspects of the struggle. Example: she did not know of Fania's statement nor did she think that Fania *means* to cause repercussions." [emphasis original] Yet, the defendant still "asked whether or not Masai or I would be able to testify as to her past activities to the 'Movement.'"¹³⁸ But what notably upset Huggins was when Charlene Mitchell, leader of the movement to free her comrade, said that Davis would not be able to collaborate on the joint book they had proposed.¹³⁹

* * *

In the prelude to 7 August, Davis was frequently in the company of the younger Jackson, which the prosecution sought to use against her in court. John Baker, a photographer for the *Los Angeles Times*, saw them together on or about 19 June 1970 at a rally at a state building on 1st Street between Broadway and Spring on the north side of the street.¹⁴⁰ Nancy Adele Conrad, depicted as a "salesgirl and student," saw them together—he was "standing next to her," she said—in July 1970 as she purchased a weapon.¹⁴¹ In July 1970 they had crossed the border from San Diego into Mexico and were stopped. Jackson, born 23 June 1953, apparently had to be 18 to do so.¹⁴² Thomas Hardin, a customs inspector, recalled that Prof. Davis was driving a green car. "I asked her what she was," he said—"was she a Black Panther or what...she stated no, that she was a Communist," explicating why 80 copies of their organ was in the vehicle. "When she stated that she was a Communist, this took me back quite a ways," he said, "as I have never had anyone state this to me," to the point that he thought she was "kidding" or "joking." As for the younger Jackson, he was a "good husky boy," but Hardin wondered if he was out past curfew. In his report, he said that Jackson

138. Huggins to "Servant," ca. 1 May 1972, Series 2, Box 44, Newton Foundation. Cf. Davis to George Jackson, pre-August 1971, Box 46, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard: "Just as viciously as you've turned against my sister and Kendra [Alexander]...adding their names to the Panther Blacklist...I really couldn't believe that you would ever accuse me (Fania & Kendra too) of consciously working against you...falling into these deep depressions."

139. Memo from Huggins, 2 May 1972, Series 2, Box 44, Newton Foundation.

140. Transcript, 10 November 1970, Reel 1, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

141. Transcript of Grand Jury, 10 November 1970, Reel 1, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

142. Testimony of San Diego officer, Jerry Hoover, 5 October 1971, Reel 3, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

was "arrogant and looked at us with hate in his eyes"; he also found a "9 millimeter unexpended bullet in her purse."¹⁴³ U.S. Customs Inspector Robert Murrell said Jackson was driving, contradicting his colleague and undermining both of their testimonies. "It was the lady that opened the trunk," and there "I found many boxes or stacks, of printed material...subversive in nature"—conclusory at best. And he did know of the UCLA controversy.¹⁴⁴

On 8 July G.E. Orton of the Patrol Division in Hollywood stopped Prof. Davis in her Rambler, and because she had previous traffic tickets, he escalated: "I put the handcuffs on her," he said later, "and put her in the back of the police vehicle," then found "Free Huey" posters in the trunk. He deposited her at the jail that carried the name Sybil Brand.¹⁴⁵

Witness Paul Wallace Robbins of Western Surplus Store at 8505 S. Western Ave. in L.A. crucially testified to a visit by Jackson and Davis just before 7 August to purchase weapons, yet he described the youth as "tall, slender, light skinned, had a natural dyed sort of a reddish or so, blonde."¹⁴⁶ The discrepancy in descriptions—"husky," his usual descriptor, vs. "slender" was catnip for defense counsel.

As Branton indicated, the prosecution did a marvelous job in pointing to the culpability of the younger Jackson, but often lost in detail was the role of Davis. The prosecution sought to tie her to weapons, but she could argue credibly that these were for her own protection and, in any case, why would she—an intelligent academic—dare to accompany Jackson to various shops to buy weapons just before 7 August? Frank Blumenthal of Eagle Loan Office at 123 Third St. in San Francisco, a pawn shop, testified that the two arrived on 5 August to buy a shotgun,¹⁴⁷ a Spanish single-shot 12 gauge shotgun, according to District Attorney

143. Testimony of Thomas Hardin, 5 October 1971, Reel 3, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

144. Testimony of Robert Murrell, 27 September 1971, Reel 3, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

145. Statement by G.E. Orton, 13 August 1970 in Transcript, 10 May 1971, Reel 5, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS. According to Deborah Jones, an erstwhile comrade of Karenga, women raping women was not unknown in this facility; as with prisons housing men, Jones fretted about becoming a "slave" behind bars: Jones, *What We Stood For*, 37, 38. Cf. *Los Angeles Times*, 13 March 2024: The federal prison for women in Dublin, Calif., is depicted by a judge as harboring a "culture of sexual abuse" often involving male personnel—including a prison chaplain.

146. Testimony of Paul Wallace Robbins, 25 April 1972, Reel 11, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS. On the same reel, 3 May 1972, David Bernard Lifson, a pawnshop employee, described the younger Jackson as having hair "between chartreuse and yellow" with "two beautiful dimples." Ronald Retana of the sheriff's office in Marin said of Jackson, "he could be described as rather good looking," Transcript, 12 April 1972, Reel 10. "Some Thoughts for Final Argument," by defense, 30 May 1972, Reel 6: "Jonathan himself was very light skinned [with] green eye[s]. Only his hair identified him as Black."

147. Transcript, 3 May 1972, Reel 11, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS. See also 10 November 1970, Reel 5, on FBI report of 5 October: "Confidential" from Special Agent Joseph Martino, interview of Owen Ward Swisher of Western Surplus. Davis comrades Steven Mitchell—son of Charlene Mitchell—and Franklin Alexander were "known to frequent" this shop: See also Receipt, 1 July 1970, Reel 5: Sold to Davis "1 M-68 9mm" weapon, "paid in full...\$140.00"; see also check

Bruce Bales of Marin County.¹⁴⁸ His colleague David Lifsen (or Lifson) recognized her, chatted about UCLA, got her autograph, and then answered queries about the weapon as she and Jackson paid attention to his answers. It was "sawed off," he said: "I have sold them by the hundreds over the last 15 years."¹⁴⁹ However, Counsel Tigar pointed to a *Los Angeles Times* article of recent vintage where the defendant told a gun store employee that she wanted a shotgun "for her own protection."¹⁵⁰ She could argue further that the plan was for Jackson to drive back to L.A. in the van, weapons in tow, or that the weapons were for the protection of comrades in the Bay Area or for her protection during her repeated visits there.

The prosecution planned to argue that the defendant spent the night with Jackson on 6 August. But then called to testify was Mabel Magers of Kansas City, Kansas. She visited San Quentin with Joan Hammer on 28 July 1970 in order to commune with the elder Jackson, and the younger showed up. On 4 August the latter borrowed an automobile, which he then left at the airport in San Francisco. Magers's attorney said the woman with roots in Kansas City did not spend the night with Jackson in San Francisco on 6 August, leading to an oblique reference by the judge to a "child," bolstered by Counsel Moore, who referred to the "birth of a child on April 20, 1971"—roughly nine months after 6 August—serving to thwart the prosecution's claim that Davis had spent the night in the seedy hotel room in question.¹⁵¹ Still, the prosecution argued that Davis used this borrowed

signed by Davis, 19 July 1970, to Western Surplus for \$6.19. Address on check given as S. Raymon but scribbled alongside 215 West 45th Street. Grand Jury Transcript, 10 November 1970, Reel 1: Swisher, 1107½ West 87th Street, also Reel 1: Davis buys "two clips, one ammo, one strap and one kit...banana clip...30 caliber shells." "Mrs. Duane Lawson" of Western Surplus testified that Steven Mitchell—born in 1951—bought a rifle accompanied by Davis and Jackson: Transcript, 25 April 1972, Reel 11: Josephine Carmen Valle was there when the three arrived with Davis in a "brown coat, brown leather outfit, smoking more or less a Tiparillo cigar": Same date of Transcript.

148. Affidavit of Bruce Bales, 20 August 1970, Reel 1, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS. See also Transcript, 10 November 1970, Reel 1.

149. Transcript, 10 November 1970, Reel 1, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

150. Transcript, 27 May 1971, Reel 2, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS. See also Bureau of Criminal Identification to V. McElhaney, Supervising Special Agent, 21 August 1970, Interview of John E. Plimpton: On 12 January 1968 Davis bought a 380 automatic Browning pistol in Hollywood. His co-worker Bud Sudderth said she was accompanied by a "Male Negro who was wearing a Black Panther lapel button" and that there were "many distinct gaps in her teeth."

151. Transcript, 3 May 1972, Reel 11, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS. See also Transcript, 10 November 1970, Grand Jury, Reel 5: FBI agents David C. Foster and S.S. Woshnis visit the Holland Hotel on 14 September on Lombard and Richardson in San Francisco. They find registration card indicates that Jackson rented a room for two persons at the rate of \$16 per night: "they possessed a Ford," presumably the yellow van. At 9 A.M. on 7 August Robert Eddy of Novato saw a yellow Honda van stalled at Richardson and Lombard: "two Negro males," said his questioner, were "in the act of pushing it...positively identified" one as Jackson but "unsure" about his helper (presumably someone flagged peremptorily?). In the parking stalls nearby were found "one empty blue box of French cigarettes bearing the names of 'Gitanes' and 'Caporal'," that were suspected to belong to Davis. The prosecution thought there was a telephone number in Jackson's wallet that would have allowed

car to drive to the San Francisco airport—presumably to rendezvous with Jackson and the hostages and presumably a freed George Jackson—but instead flew to Los Angeles.¹⁵²

Near that same time, Davis and Jackson were together as she cashed a check at the Security Pacific Bank at 49th and Western in L.A. for \$200.¹⁵³ On 4 August she cashed another check at a bank in Oakland.¹⁵⁴ The prosecution was seeking to raise nefarious inferences as to why she was desirous of holding so much cash, while the defense saw nothing sinister in holding greenbacks.

On 5 August, Robert West, an administrator at San Quentin testified, that—again accompanied by the younger Jackson—she signed in as “Diane Robinson,” while wearing a “petite type military jacket.” But since he had only recently been a registered member of the ultra-rightist American Independence Party, objective observers could easily question his credibility.¹⁵⁵ Still West’s colleague at SQ, Robert Leo Ayers, identified the person accompanying the younger Jackson as having a “gap between her front teeth,”¹⁵⁶ which seemed to identify the

him to contact Davis at the airport, presumably after she had driven there: Transcript, 23 May 1972, Reel 12. The prosecution thought that the car borrowed by Jackson was driven by Davis to the airport: Transcript, 30 May 1972, Reel 12. See also Memo from James M. Silver, FBI, to Prosecutor Harris, ca. August 1970, Reel 5: On 6 August there was a visit at San Quentin between the Jackson brothers and a “white female adult whom he described as being tall with silver gray hair and over 40 years of age.” Juror Timothy recalled the question posed to Magers about spending the night with Jackson on 6 August: Timothy, *Jury Woman*, 153. Pearlman, *Call Me Phaedra*, 231: Magers denoted as mother of the younger Jackson’s son.

152. Affidavit of George Murray, 7 February 1972, Reel 6, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS. See Statement of Micki Magers, 28 January 1972, Box 47, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard: Though having ties to Kansas City, she had a degree from San Jose State University. Little cigars were found in the borrowed vehicle after it was recovered from the airport in San Francisco. In the same box, see Application for Search Warrant of car belonging to Mabel Micki Magers. There is a suggestion that Davis used the car on 7 August; contents of the car include “La Paz Cigar box.”

153. Testimony of Margaret Eichenlaub and Michael Plaisance, 26 April 1972, Reel 11, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

154. Testimony of Sherry Boes, teller, 1 May 1972, Reel 11, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

155. Testimony of Robert West, 1 May 1972, Reel 11, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS. At the Grand Jury West testified that on 4 August 1970, Jackson and Davis visited George Jackson at San Quentin and both returned the next day: Transcript, 10 November 1970, Reel 1. On 15 July 1970 Attorney John Thorne sought to have Davis “appointed an investigator” so she “could have access” to an imprisoned Jackson: Interview of Thorne, 29 September 1970, Reel 5. It was said that she claimed to be a “cousin...distant cousin” of the Jacksons. This Jackson counsel said that he met her “six months ago, seven months.” See also Statement by Louis F. May, Jr. He was said to have seen the younger Jackson and Davis at San Quentin on 3 August and again on 5 August; this latter day was the occasion for the two to engage in a “pretty serious verbal quarrel and he threw his glasses down on the ground.” He was 15 feet away. “Diane Johnson”—not Robinson—was the “name she was using to sign in.” They were in a yellow van and he saw them again on 6 August similarly. He noticed the “gap between her teeth...I have the same gap...it gives a person a complex. It does myself.” She was “very thin, flat chested.” However, being a convict himself—a child molester—his testimony may have been undermined. See Transcript, 8 May 1972, Reel 12. See also juror Timothy on the purported “quarrel” between the two: Timothy, *Jury Woman*, 151.

156. Testimony of Robert Leo Ayers, 1 May 1972, Reel 11, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

defendant—but was there anything really probative about a prison visit pointing toward hostage taking? Madeline F. Lucas was visiting this prison on 4 August to see her stepson; she had lived in San Diego for a decade and said she recognized Davis since “she got quite a lot of coverage down there.”¹⁵⁷ Michael Ernest Vonada said he recognized Davis and Jackson a day or two before 7 August at a service station in Marin County in the yellow van used to transport hostages: “Her teeth were spaced apart,” he said and she was “smoking a black cigar.”¹⁵⁸ This firefighter had stopped by the station and “identified the woman as Angela Davis...she was smoking a black cigar,” he repeated, which “seemed quite odd” but made her memorable.¹⁵⁹ Dennis Bosch, an auto mechanic, was nearby when the couple arrived. “She wore a light blouse, light mini-skirt and boots,” he said—and the following day, 7 August, he saw that very same van they were in being taken away.¹⁶⁰

The prosecution believed that on 6 August at 10:30 a.m. a “male and female Negro” arrived at the service station in a Hertz “rent-a-truck” with a dead battery, said to be Davis and Jackson.¹⁶¹ Peter Fleming was the attendant at the gas station near the Civic Center, near North San Pedro Boulevard and San Pablo. On 6 August, he said, he saw “the girl driving” a “Hertz rental...they had a dead battery.”¹⁶² One journalist asserted that “probably the most damaging testimony produced before the grand jury...was given by Peter Fleming.”¹⁶³ Yet deft lawyering helped to weaken his testimony, for example, uncovering that he likely had a “pseudoisochromatic” condition—i.e. color blindness.¹⁶⁴

During this telescoped period, Davis and members of the Jackson family were spotted at a Berkeley motel.¹⁶⁵ Deputy Sheriff Charles C. Foster of Monterey County recalled seeing Jackson and Davis together in the courtroom for Soledad Brothers proceedings.¹⁶⁶

Subsequently, Georgia Jackson—mother of the two young men in question—was questioned about her and her youngest son residing in Berkeley at 2230 Tenth Street, a “Communist Center...where people without funds stay.” On 1 August she and her son arrived from Los Angeles and two days later she met with George Jackson at San Quentin. The younger son moved to reside with Herman Blake.

157. Testimony of Madeline F. Lucas, 3 May 1972, Reel 11, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

158. Testimony of Michael Ernest Vonada, 4 May 1972, Reel 11, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

159. Statement of Michael Vonada, 27 January 1971, Reel 5, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

160. Statement of Dennis Bosch, 3 February 1971, Reel 5, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

161. Minutes of Grand Jury, 10 November 1970, Reel 5, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

162. Testimony of Peter Fleming, 10 November 1970, Reel 1, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

163. *Detroit Free Press*, 30 January 1972.

164. File on Peter Fleming, ca. 1972, Box 47, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard. See Transcript, 30 May 1972, Reel 12, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS: Bruce Eldon Spivey, ophthalmologist, on Fleming's eyesight.

165. Transcript, 26 April 1972, Reel 11, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

166. Transcript, 18 April 1972, Reel 10, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

future leading professor at Santa Cruz—"at least he was supposed to stay there," she said. He did meet with his older brother on 3 August; "he probably hitchhiked there" and was in the area through 7 August. "I haven't seen Angela since the 24th or 25th of July," she said. She did not know that her son and the academic traveled to Mexico in late July, she said. She'd first met Davis in April or May 1970. There were no firearms in her house, least of all held by her young son. "I am a very nosy person," she confessed, and would have known about this. She was motherly toward Davis: "She was always doing some silly things...losing things and leaving them lying around," and "dressed in some fatigue type clothing." Her interrogator added: "She stated that in her opinion Jonathan had carried out this plan all on his own because Angela Davis was too intelligent to get involved in such a plan and she never advocated the use of guns or violence."¹⁶⁷

Boldly, in her opening statement to the jury, the defendant spoke openly about how "I spent much time visiting in the home of the Jackson family—and that members of the Jackson family visited my home...we traveled together." Besieged because of the UCLA controversy, "I moved from one apartment to another around the beginning of July" 1970 and no, the younger Jackson did not live with her—contrary to prosecutorial assertions.¹⁶⁸

The defendant may have won this case almost a year before the acquittal when in July 1971 she argued successfully to become co-counsel, an "extremely important element of our defense strategy," she said accurately. She proceeded with a lengthy and competent recitation of relevant legal authorities, while referring to Afeni Shakur, the contemporaneous Chicano hero Reies Tijerina, and the Sacco-Vanzetti case of the 1920s that had brought her comrade William Patterson to the CP. "I have no, absolutely no intentions of creating any kind of disruptive activities in the courtroom," she assured the judge, adding in an apparent veiled reference to her co-defendant, "I can't speak for certain other parties in the courtroom." The prosecutor said he had no objection to this pre-trial though he did object to her "entrance and departure" which was "occasion for...shouts, singing, slogan...[it] happens every day," he said with frustration. Still, he praised her "presentation" which was "lawyer-like and I must say impressive" in that "she did not call me a mad dog" or "racist," which was "refreshing." Yet he wondered if unprofessionally she might argue with witnesses and upset decorum and suggested that she could easily explain herself on the witness stand. She wanted to talk to jurors, he suggested, absent cross-examination. Hisses from an alert audience greeting his arrival in the courtroom did not improve his sangfroid. He was displeased when the courtroom was used "for the distributions of bulletins" from her defense committee. Prof. Davis

167. Interview with Georgia Jackson, 14 October 1970, Reel 5, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS. Cf. Report by R.J. Mercurio, Special Agent, 30 May 1970, in Transcript, 10 May 1971, Reel 5: Georgia Jackson buys ammunition.

168. Transcript, 29 March 1972, Reel 6, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

reverted to design when she noted that the architect Frank Lloyd Wright was “exceedingly idealistic when he conceived the architectural idea behind this courtroom...in a circle”—given the irksome contestation of biting argument there, a tunnel would have been more appropriate. For the prosecution, she said, “all but characterizes me as a wild beast,” while “a key element of our defense strategy will depend on my ability to participate in the trial.”¹⁶⁹

Davis was true to her word when she examined witnesses in pre-trial jousting concerning the grand jury that indicted her. She exposed the fact that Judge Thomas Keating, a critical figure in this process, was a member of the “Native Sons of the Golden West,” and the “Druids” and Elks too, questioning if their lack of racial and socio-economic diversity was prejudicial. He admitted that he would be loath to be part of clubs that had Communists or Panthers as members.¹⁷⁰ Defense counsel Howard Moore examined yet another jurist, Samuel Gardiner, about the grand jury, asking—actually instructing—“you have never engaged in the practice of law and work associations as a private lawyer with a member of a race opposite than your own.” Reply: “Yes, that’s true,” referring to the Elks, Masons, and a Scottish rite formation. When he sought to recover by mentioning his employing a Black cook and housekeeper, the audience erupted in mirth. And there was a “Japanese reporter” on his staff, he offered as he retreated. Moore pointed out that Marin County—the site of this proceeding before it shifted southward to Santa Clara County—had a considerable Black population. Judge E. Warren McGuire, a Catholic Republican, had served in a lily-white law firm previously. “I would say no,” he said without embarrassment, “[I] never practiced with anyone who was Black.”¹⁷¹ Unavailing, the defense wanted a hearing about the grand jury since—it was said—a “close personal friend” of Judge Haley sat on this body. The defense was outraged when they thought they heard the prosecution suggest that “Black people are too dumb to serve on grand juries.” Counsel Moore found “this kind of racism...very upsetting” and seemed on the verge of a walkout. “I’d like to leave myself,” said Davis.¹⁷²

This examination of the grand jury was marked by an indelible and unfortunate aspect of this trial. Magee’s counsel objected strenuously to their client being “chained around the neck and around the wrists and around the body to his chair” so that he “can[not] adequately breathe.” The audience then protested in declamations of “Right on.” On behalf of Davis, her attorney—Margaret Burnham—objected to “Mr. Magee’s presence in chains” and argued for a larger courtroom which would have had the ancillary impact of opening the world’s eyes to this injustice.¹⁷³

169. Transcript, 21 July 1971, Reel 3, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

170. Transcript, 22 July 1971, Reel 3, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

171. Transcript, 2 August 1971, Reel 3, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

172. Transcript, 20 July 1971, Reel 2, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

173. Transcript, 9 March 1971, Reel 2, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

Magee's counsel told the court that he had spoken with Magee 10 times in recent days and his client insisted that he did not recognize their jurisdiction, given his analysis that state courts were responsible for his plight. "There is a conviction which rests on fraud," he maintained, "that has resulted in...me serving approximately eight years of my life in prison"—an extraordinary term that only ended with his 2023 death, decades behind bars after his 1939 birth. "White racialsists," he contended as the audience applauded, "seek to have me murdered under color of law." The judge, unmoved, forbade the withdrawal of Magee's counsel and forbade his client from defending himself as counsel, as the 5'8", 155-pound defendant remained chained and surrounded by county deputies and San Quentin guards alike. Davis counsel Michael Tigar demanded that he be unchained and cited the haunting words of Yale's Kingman Brewster on the difficulty of a "Black Revolutionary" receiving a fair trial in the U.S. The repetitive cry resounded in the audience: "Free Angela; Free Ruchell...Right on, Right on!"¹⁷⁴ The next day, the judge admitted, "I wouldn't mind at all if I was disqualified" in response to a Magee motion.¹⁷⁵

Davis's counsel Margaret Burnham—described by juror Mary Timothy as a "small, casually dressed Black woman with a round face and a short natural hairstyle, she seemed too young to be an attorney"¹⁷⁶—termed a serving judge both "prejudicial" and "racist" toward Magee. Like a Greek chorus, the audience added "Power to the People," the Panther mantra to their customary chants.¹⁷⁷

A buoyed Magee then called for the "arrest" of his counsel since they should be "charged with conspiracy to murder" him. With symbolic profundity, he faced the audience—not the judge—in speaking. Carrow, his chastened attorney, then introduced "our counsel Henry Ramsey," a Black law professor in Berkeley. In turn Magee denied filing "frivolous documents," while yet another attorney denied cruelly that Magee was a "moron." Said counsel Howard Moore, "We are simply asking the white people of California and the United States to adhere to their own laws." As proceedings droned on interminably in discussing Magee's fate, the thought occurred to observers as to how this process affected the fate of Prof. Davis. For example, in the Spring of 1971 instead of determining her application for bail, at issue were Magee's motions.¹⁷⁸

Finally, Magee's lawyers were replaced by Ernest Graves of L.A., but Magee objected. Graves equated his client—and Davis—with Joan of Arc, who was allowed to defend herself or, more relevant to California, the highly publicized Caryl Chessman. There was a more practical concern: "I'm up here from Los Angeles," he said complainingly, "I have no office, no court facilities, no

774. Transcript, 16 March 1971, Reel 2, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

775. Transcript, 17 March 1971, Reel 2, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

776. Timothy, *Jury Woman*, 31.

777. Transcript, 21 April 1971, Reel 2, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

778. Transcript, 29 April 1971, Reel 2, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

secretary, no library. I have nothing." He agreed that this wrangling interrupted Davis's "bail motion." For his part, Magee recited his being traduced by attorneys stretching back to 1963, recalling vividly the "trickery...conspiracy that exists from President Nixon down to prison guards in this case." With a flourish, he said, "Tell me this is not another Los Angeles attorney, Klan gang, Ku Klux Klan gang." Counsel Moore backed Magee in that the state court did not have jurisdiction in light of the defendant's attempt to effectuate removal to federal court.¹⁷⁹ At one point, Graves complained that all his "legal papers" were seized, further complicating his efforts.¹⁸⁰ Magee kept disqualifying judges, some of them seeming willing in this regard. But was that in the interest of his co-defendant?

Undeterred, Magee termed his attorney "Ku Klux Klan man." But then he turned on Howard Moore, a respected Black attorney nationally, since he didn't take the habeas corpus route to free his client: He "puts on a show," said the chained defendant, and was "pretending...making empty gestures," engaging in "verbal trickery" while "putting on a show."¹⁸¹ His Defense Committee told "Sister Angela" about "serious questions in regard to your attorneys," Moore particularly.¹⁸² Magee then assailed the judge, the prosecutor and Davis's counsel, Sheldon Otis—and other "buzzards"—as applause greeted him from the audience. After a recess, an inspired Moore again agreed that the court lacked jurisdiction over Magee, adding vituperatively, "the indictment against Miss Davis is not worth the paper upon which it is written"—a "fraud" no less.¹⁸³ Moore—described as a "large man, about forty years old, tall with broad shoulders" with hair "thinning and short on top" and "wide and thick on the sides" with a "short blunt goatee"—chose not to engage on that level.¹⁸⁴

179. Transcript, 5 May 1971, Reel 2, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

180. Transcript, 8 September 1971, Reel 3, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

181. Transcript, 24 May 1971, Reel 2, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

182. Memo from Magee Defense Committee, 9 June 1971, Angela Davis File-NPL.

183. Transcript, 28 June 1971, Reel 2, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

184. Timothy, *Jury Woman*, 103. See also Affidavit of Howard Moore, 8 June 1971: "I have leased a house at 1880 San Pedro Avenue" in Berkeley "for a period of fifteen months, commencing March 1, 1971 and terminating June 30, 1972...moving my wife and three children from Georgia to the house in Berkeley." See Transcript, 2 June 1971, Reel 2, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS: Habeas for Davis bruited. Also, Moore raises the potential of a life sentence for Magee stemming from a "ten dollar robbery." Transcript, 15 June 1971, Reel 2: Habeas raised again.

Chapter 17

The Mass Movement—Globally—Prevails, 1970-1973

Criminal defendants, notably Black ones, have been convicted and railroaded to the gas chamber on evidence flimsier than that which led to Professor Davis's acquittal. She was able to escape this dire fate not only because of skilled lawyering—especially that of the battle-hardened Branton—but also because of the mass movement, not least abroad. When many Panthers were unable to enjoy such global support, part of the reason was that their turn toward anti-Sovietism and Maoism isolated them from the post-Comintern Communist parties, which were essential to Davis's defense. Even the African National Congress of South Africa had an interlocking directorate with the Communist Party,¹ while Angolan revolutionaries may have heard distressfully about, for example, George Jackson's fondness for Holden Roberto, with close ties to the CIA.² And Havana was able to keep its head above water and accumulate the resources to intervene in the Angolan independence struggle in 1975 precisely because of being backstopped by Moscow—reviled by Panthers of various stripes as "Soviet Social Imperialists." If one were to do a concrete analysis of the U.S., one might conclude that the millions of votes accumulated by the likes of Nixon and Reagan was not mere happenstance, mandating that those interested sincerely in radical change perforce had to broker global alliances—but with whom?

* * *

1. *The Black Panther*, 25 March 1972: At a certain point, the BPP developed close ties with an ideological foe of the ANC, one David Sibeko of the "Pan Africanist Congress of Azania," who then admitted that "we worked very closely with...UNITA [of Angola]" and "COREMO [of Mozambique]," both of which had questionable ties to U.S. intelligence. Cf. *The Black Panther*, 22 April 1972: Hugo Pinell, Panther and "close comrade" of George Jackson.

2. Cf. Brent, *Panther in Exile*, on Cuban Radio, ca. February 1976, Reel 12, Black Panther Documents: The crisis in Angola was a "fantastic conscious[ness] raising event" for "Blacks in particular...for a long time with the Black Nationalist Movement, the cultural nationalists" in particular, there was support for "Holden Roberto...supported by the CIA and American Imperialism...unfortunate the situation with the Chinese and the Soviets...Chinese...supported the wrong side," i.e. Roberto.

Angela Davis was detained in Manhattan in October 1970 and returned to California on 22 December after failures of habeas corpus, bars to extradition, appeals, etc. She was placed in the Marin County jail and by March 1971 she complained that "until approximately six weeks ago I was not permitted any outdoor or indoor exercise at all." For the "85 days of my confinement here" this had been the case. "My cell is tiny (approximately 7' by 7') and "windowless," and there was "no library" available.³ An immediate issue became bail for the defendant. By mid-June 1971 the defense delivered 36,000 signatures from the U.S. and Canada demanding bail; included were "five volumes of statements."⁴ A reflection of the correlation of forces was exposed when Charlene Mitchell announced that Prof. Davis ultimately received 400,000 signatures domestically in support of her bail application, overwhelmingly from Black Americans—and 500,000 from abroad.⁵ This combination—a push from below by Black Americans combined with massive global coordination—had been the key to overcoming enslavement, then Jim Crow, and was replicated by 1972 (and often neglected since).

3. Affidavit, 27 April 1971 (submitted March 1971), 10 November 1971, Reel 1, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS. See also Report, 1972, Box 46, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard: Tackwood says 7 August event called off but Jonathan Jackson not told. In same collection, Box 47, see also Rap Sheet of Carr, ca. 1972. Apparently, Carr had confessed to murder, as he acknowledged that Tackwood was his brother-in-law—whom he described as a "rat." Thus, approach their admissions cautiously. In the same box, see Carr Probation Report, 17 December 1971: Carr is listed as a beefy 5'11" and 211 pounds. See also *San Francisco Chronicle*, 23 June 1975, on the betrayal of the younger Jackson. *Washington Post*, 17 October 1971, on the betrayal of Jackson. Carr was said to be close to FBI informant Tom Mosher: Jo Durden-Smith, "The Last One Home: Requiem for a Mass Movement," *California*, January 1985, 84-93, 95-6, 93, Vertical File," George Jackson, Freedom Archives-Berkeley. See also Transcript, 11 May 1972, Reel 12, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS: The prosecution argues that Betsy Hammer, also known as Betsy Carr, brings trousers to cleaners in January 1971 and "handwriting in green ink is by" George Jackson. Prosecutor: "The author writes I must save Angela Davis." This latter episode was raised in the judge's chambers: Transcript, 27 March 1972, Reel 8. See also Betsy Carr to "Comrade," n.d., Reel 30, Black Panther Documents: Jimmy "would like \$600 to go to Steve Bingham and only a thousand going to Ramsey." See also Interview with Carr, 29 July 1970, Box 3, J. Herman Blake Papers: He had known Jackson since 1963, he said. That the LAPD was operating undercover agents in the Bay Area was extraordinary: Gary and Goldberg, *Streetfighter*, 254. See also *Oakland Tribune*, 6 October 1972: Two men from LA guilty of murder in slaying of Carr: Lamar Mims and Richard Rodriguez. *The Black Panther*, 5 April 1975, Jackson set up by Carr, the LAPD, FBI and CIA. See also Undated document of uncertain provenance, Reel 33, Black Panther Documents: Tackwood says Santa Cruz cops knew of 7 August beforehand, but that "Cotton" failed to involve the BPP in the breakout but that it was Mafiosi (above) who actually fires the shot that kills Jonathan Jackson. *The Black Panther*, 8 May 1975. Tackwood: "Everybody know there wasn't a 9mm [pistol] smuggled into the prison that day," triggering Jackson's murder.

4. Transcript, 14 June 1971, Reel 2, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

5. *People's World*, 1 July 1972.

Besides bail, another debatable matter was the venue. Moore objected to Marin County, as tensions remained inflamed there and, besides, he said, the Hall of Justice was "heavily damaged by a bomb blast" shortly after 7 August.⁶ That Moore felt compelled to dispute the seemingly descriptive term "shoot-out" affixed to San Rafael was indicative of why he desired a venue change.⁷ But Moore also objected to the eventual site—Santa Clara County,⁸ south of San Francisco, and Burnham agreed, arguing that it was worse than Marin.⁹ (However, the bomb threats at the latter site and the potential for a warped jury pool to draw from, contributed to a change of venue.¹⁰) Thus, called to the witness stand was Jorge Acevedo, a resident of Menlo Park and active with their version of the Community Alert Patrol. He was on the faculty of both San Jose State and Berkeley but was not enthusiastic about his county with its "two hundred thousand Chicanos" within a "million in population" but with "very few Blacks, very few Indians."¹¹ Black librarian Aaron Harris was more censorious in his evaluation of the county, pointing to a recent cop killing of a Black man, John Henry Smith, which exposed rancid attitudes that would ultimately be harmful to the defendants. Ira Hall said there were "fewer than 20,000 Blacks" in the county and, as for anticommunism, he pointed to recent penalties imposed on Communist faculty member Jack Kurzweil of San Jose State University.¹² Such testimony prompted the defendant to inform "Dear Mommy and Daddy" about the "bad news about Santa Clara [County]: 1.5% of the population is Black."¹³ Her sister, Fania Davis Jordan, was even more baleful, regretting the "county's decision to spend in excess of \$500,000...on 'security measures,'" involving "extra policemen...machinery to detect weapons," meaning that "jurors will be influence[d] by this false portrayal of Angela": This would be an "armed camp." The "size of the courtroom is pivotal" with a mere 59 seats, "2/3 of these already reserved for the press," meaning "less than 18 for family, friends & supporters."¹⁴ When a controversial prisoner came to testify, guards were stationed on rooftops with high-powered rifles.¹⁵

6. Transcript, 20 October 1971, Reel 4, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

7. Transcript, 21 October 1971, Reel 4, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

8. Transcript, 2 November 1971, Reel 4, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

9. Transcript, 4 November 1971, Reel 4, Black Panther Documents. See Aptheker, *Morning Breaks*, 76: 100 workers at Marin Civic Center supported bail for the defendant, including "office workers, cooks and electricians."

10. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 18 March 1971.

11. Transcript, 11 November 1971, Reel 4, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

12. Transcript, 12 November 1971, Reel 4, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS. On Kurzweil, see Bud Hutchinson to Michael Traynor, 18 June 1971, Box 9, United Professors of California Papers-San Francisco State University.

13. Letter from Davis, ca. December 1971, Box 43, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard. See also *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 23 March 1972: Santa Clara County, it reports, is 1.8% Black, 18% Chicano.

14. Fania to "Dear Mother," 22 January 1971, Box 44, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

15. "Trial Bulletin," 26 May 1972, Box 44, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

Finally, a year after being extradited, and just before receiving bail in early 1972, she was transferred to Santa Clara County. According to counselor Moore, her cell in Palo Alto was "8 feet by 6 feet by 4 feet, with a washbasin, a toilet and bunks—and some kind of wire that goes over it that makes it look like a cage." Attorney Burnham complained that her client "doesn't have access to either her typewriter or her radio," plus she was "[un]able to have any confidential conferences with her." This graphic portrait appeared in the BPP organ at a time when a rift between the camps had yet to emerge frontally. Thus, in their pages, Chairman Seale appeared adjacent to a "Free Angela" placard.¹⁶

Panthers were omnipresent when her birthday in January 1972 was marked in Berkeley.¹⁷ The defense was torn by the prospect of severing Davis's case from that of Ruchell Magee. The prosecutor said "they have neatly straddled the issue: they are both for it and against it." Moore raised the issue, said Davis was opposed to it, then shifted to blaming the prosecution since the "insistence on [a] joint trial is not in good faith by the state." As if he were needling the defendants, the prosecutor accused them of pursuing "delaying tactics," certainly not in the interests of Davis.¹⁸ Magee was clear: As reporter Earl Ofari put it, "he has carefully studied every feature of this case" and "has clearly projected...that Blacks can and should initiate revolutionary violence." Many of Davis's backers, however, found it unwise for her to articulate that point in court.¹⁹

Davis's team did not join yet another Magee challenge to the court (an "affidavit of prejudice"), not least because, they said, "it was filed by Mr. Magee and his attorney without consultation with Miss Davis or her co-counsel."²⁰ And despite the sensitivity involved of severing the case of the multilingual intellectual from that of Magee, by early June 1971 this was discussed precisely in the judge's chambers.²¹

16. *The Black Panther*, 25 December 1971.

17. *The Black Panther*, 29 January 1972.

18. Transcript, 14 June 1971, Reel 2, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

19. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 1 October 1971.

20. Memo on Behalf of Defendant Davis, 5 May 1971, Reel 1, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS. See also Motion Filed by Evelle Younger, Attorney General-California, 9 June 1971, Reel 1: "In his relentless effort to frustrate this criminal prosecution defendant Magee has filed four removal petitions in the federal courts. Each has been rejected as legally frivolous" with a court asserting that he was "abusing its processes."

21. Transcript, 2 June 1971, Reel 2, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS. The three principals—Davis, Jackson and Magee—all had roots in L.A. The latter arrived at San Quentin in September 1965. Jackson arrived at this prison in July 1970 from Soledad. In February 1970 he was indicted in Monterey for assault and murder. Davis visited him in early May 1970 and was listed as his "cousin." Fleeta Drumgo arrived at San Quentin from Soledad in July 1970: Transcript, 10 November 1970, Reel 1. The Davis defense was concerned with the status difference between her and her co-defendants and the scuttlebutt that would ensue if there were a severance. See e.g., Davis to Aptheker, 17 July 1971, Box 50, Bettina Aptheker Papers: "Only relatively speaking could my background be called 'bourgeois.'" See also Davis letter of 2 June 1970, Reel 11, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

This Magee irruption was a source of constant angst for his co-defendant. At one point he "simply reneged" on concord, leaving her "stunned," since what she "fear[ed] most" was that "Ruchell might launch a public relations campaign directed against me." But now he was issuing "demands" for "total severance 'politically and personally,'" leaving her "very distressed to say the least." And this led her counsel, Dennis Roberts, to withdraw from her team because of this maneuver, though he had been receiving \$1000 monthly without sharing the condition that his continuation was contingent on no severance. "I blew up when I heard about this," she exclaimed, "particularly since he and [counsel] Mike Tigar had never failed to make sarcastic and condescending comments about Ruchell whenever he had interrupted.... I called him a hypocrite... I called him every name I could think of, told him he was fucking with my life."²² Davis might have heard of the press report—retained by the UCSD chancellor—that Magee was offered a bribe to testify against her, which he denied.²³

By July a motion to sever was filed, the grounds being the "likelihood of confusion" in that "defendants have conflicting counts"—Magee backed this motion filed by Davis.²⁴

"Shithead lawyers... lousy son-of-a-bitch" was his appellation affixed to Graves, his counsel; "punk son-of-a-bitch; you dog motherfucker" and other choice words led to a "disturbance between defendant Magee and Mr. Graves,"²⁵ according to the court reporter. "If [I] had to do it all over again, I would be an oceanographer,"²⁶ said Graves at one point, as he mused about departing the courtroom, possibly for a more comforting deep sea dive.

Then Magee clarified: "I was not arguing it"—removal to federal court—"in order to deny Miss Davis." Then she spoke eloquently about the shackles on him, amidst the "Right On" cheer of the audience. "[He] and I are bound together," for "each time his rights are negated and denied, my rights are also negated and denied." She rejected "attempts... to drive a wedge between [us]... he was approached on a number of occasions and asked whether or not he would testify against me," which he rebuffed. Yes, there were "slight disagreements on legal

²²My Aunt, descendant of slaves... now lives in a twenty room mansion in the hills of Beverly Hills. Before she disassociated herself from me, I was 17."

²²² Davis to Aptheker, 23 July 1971, Box 50, Bettina Aptheker Papers. Davis had reason to be concerned. After journalist Almena Lomax claimed that she was "fingered" for arrest by the CP, she went on to say the defendant was "elitist" in contrast to Magee: *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 26 November 1970. Communist Carl Bloice attacked Lomax in turn: *People's World*, 24 October 1970.

²²³ *San Diego Evening Tribune*, 11 January 1971, Box 246, Chancellor Subject Files.

²²⁴ Motion to Sever, 19 July 1971, Reel 1, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS. See lengthy statement by Davis defense committee on severance in *People's World*, 7 August 1971. Cf. Document, 3 June 1939, Box 1, Harper Knowles Papers: The precursor of the Davis-Magee severance was that involving Tom Mooney and Warren Billings, who sought to act similarly in order to "avoid confusion."

²²⁵ Transcript, 27 May 1971, Reel 2, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

²²⁶ Transcript, 29 June 1971, Reel 2, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

strategy.” Magee expressed the point that he remained busy drafting legal papers: “I have written all night,” leaving him “sleepy too.”²⁷

The prosecutor continued to object, inducing Magee to respond, “I’ll beat you to death, you lousy dog...you lousy buzzard,” as applause from the audience rippled through the courtroom. Finally in mid-July 1971 Davis’s counsel filed for a separate trial and severance, as Graves said that his client “stand[s] mute in the matter.” Magee also demanded a severance since “we have two different defenses.... if I could get these handcuffs off,” he told the prosecutor, “I would knock your teeth down your throat,” as applause greeted his fiery words. “If I could get a gun, your honor, I would start shooting,” apparently beginning with the prosecutor.²⁸

The defendants’ supporters made their partiality known in the courtroom. Early on the prosecutor complained about the courtroom audience acting as if they were in a sporting match, greeting the defense with an “ovation” and his side with “hisses.” The audience was portrayed by him as “unruly” with their “shouting” and “singing,” while “threats” against the prosecution were “screamed.” It was “getting worse,” he said, though the “same faces” were “showing up day after day.”²⁹ Steadfastly, Davis insisted on her right to say, “Power to the People” to those in the courtroom.³⁰

This was not the only point of contention. Early in the proceedings Moore angrily objected to a “personal search of myself” upon entering the courtroom. The guards not only grabbed his copy of Paul Robeson’s memoir, but he was “given a body search, a pat-down,” in his words. Then a second time a deputy “began to search me rigorously,” while “claw[ing] on my chest and body.” An irate Moore had “never seen the Attorney General or any of his deputies publicly searched,” finding this both “racially motivated” and politically too, since the prime defendant was a Communist.³¹

It was not just the defendants who were pressured, in other words. The attorneys too had their trials and tribulations. By late 1971 defense counsel Sheldon Otis was resigning.³² But when one door closes, another opens—and in January 1972 in walked Leo Branton, perhaps the litigator most qualified nationally to deliver a positive result for Davis. He had “litigation pending in London,” but it was “absolutely essential,” said a gracious Moore, “for another trial lawyer with trial experience and familiar with the California Evidence Code” to be on the team—capable of slipping in probative evidence and keeping out the

27. Transcript, 30 June 1971, Reel 2, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

28. Transcript, 20 July 1971, Reel 2, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

29. Transcript, 6 July 1971, Reel 2, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

30. Transcript, 21 October 1971, Reel 4, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

31. Transcript, 11 November 1971, Reel 4, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

32. Transcript, 29 November 1971, Reel 4, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

prejudicial. At the same session, Charlene Mitchell was added as an investigator, enhancing her prominence.³³

Branton not only had rescued Panthers from terrible fates and defended Communists during the height of the Red Scare, he also had helped to save Wesley Robert Wells from the gas chamber, experience directly relevant to Davis's case.³⁴ For this balding, light-skinned litigator, the Davis case was the culmination of a storied career that had commenced in 1949, when he opened a law office at 1111 E. Vernon in L.A. Like his client, he was an offspring of Dixie, having grown up in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, and having graduated from Tennessee State University. His father owned a taxi fleet, and his grandfather owned an entire block. Yet, he averred, "I couldn't go to the soda fountain." His younger brother Wiley, also a lawyer, leapt into national consciousness during the pivotal school desegregation battle in Little Rock in 1957. But when he was a youth he was involved in a fracas in a store, knocked a Euro-American down—and cops arrived at his doorstep. The elder brother and their uncle met them with shotguns in hand, giving him insight into his client's difficulties stemming from San Rafael. This led to an eight-year boycott of the store. But Wiley Branton had to flee for a while, yet both brothers became successful attorneys and subscribed to the intuitive idea that "a trial lawyer is really an actor." The older Branton not only defended Communists but also the Black military man Bucky Walker, accused of murdering a Euro-American couple in Riverside, Calif. "There had never been a Black person on the jury" in that county, which led to a Black woman hanging the jury on the death penalty. He was the attorney for Wesley Robert Wells in a case promoted by Communists and Panthers alike—though he continued to rue the fact that the NAACP shunned him and Charles Garry because "we were too close to Communists"³⁵—a strategic blunder. After all, from the NAACP viewpoint, Branton unveiled his true sympathies when he served as co-chair of the defense committee for Julius and Ethel Rosenberg,³⁶ Communists accused of being so-called "atomic spies" and executed in 1953 as a result.

At one juncture Bettina Aptheker thought that there would be "nobody better" for this case than Charles Garry, but he was up to his neck in Panther cases. As for John Thorne, who had handled litigation concerning George Jackson, "most

33. Transcript, 10 January 1972, Reel 7, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS. See also Pamphlet for 20th National Convention of CPUSA, "The Fight to Free Angela Davis," 1972. Mitchell noted as member of Central Committee since 1972 and in 1966 was on the Executive Committee of Temporary Alliance of Local Organizations in L.A.: "She was instrumental in founding the Community Alert Patrol which grew out of TALO," Box 1, Angela Davis Collection-Clairemont. See also *San Francisco Examiner*, 8 January 1971, Series 2, Box 41, Newton Foundation: Franklin Alexander appointed investigator on Davis's behalf.

34. Transcript, 1972, Box 46, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

35. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 20 April 1972. See also *People's World*, 7 March 1970: Wells from San Quentin on Du Bois.

36. *People's World*, 17 June 1972.

are opposed," she opined, "me too," since "everything I've ever heard" about him was "less than nice, to put it mildly," she added elliptically.³⁷

Still, the arrival of Branton was the real coup, and he had good reason to associate himself with this case. For as co-counsel Moore put it, "All defense counsel agree that this case is extremely important to the peoples of the world."³⁸ Soon, Anthony Amsterdam of the Stanford Law School was added to the team in order to provide arguments on bail.³⁹

By at least March 1972, Davis's counsel had an office in San Jose at 816 North First Street, with Branton, Burnham, Moore, Doris Walker—and Davis—listed.⁴⁰ Lawyers and offices meant money, and Davis had the advantage of having on side Marvel Cooke of Harlem, an adroit fundraiser and administrator: In one example among many, in January 1972 she sent \$25,000 to Moore and simply requested "accounting."⁴¹ Actor and writer Ossie Davis, a celebrity himself, performed yeoman service on behalf of Davis. Taking note of a confab organized by Louise Patterson—a veteran of struggles since the 1920s—Henry Winston found this celebrity's role to be "simply magnificent."⁴² Post-acquittal, it was

37. Bettina Aptheker to Mickie Lima, 13 November 1970, Angela Davis File-NPL. See also Transcript, 11 May 1972, Reel 12, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS: At a September 1970 interview Thorne said that on 5 August he heard from Davis—now he denies this. Then in a grand jury appearance he returned to his September line. See also Transcript, 26 April 1972, Reel 11: Thorne has difficulty recalling Davis's pre-August 1970 role with the Jackson defense. This was a fraught process with attorney-client privileges at issue and dueling attorneys Branton and Garry. See also Transcript, 2 May 1972, Reel 11: Privilege found between Thorne and Jackson but not this counsel and Davis. Then questions turned on whether she called him on the evening of 5 August, seeking to become an investigator in Jackson's case so she could gain access to him. See also Thorne to Davis, Newton and Jackson, 11 December 1970, Reel 30, Black Panther Documents: Rambling about revolution.

38. Transcript, 25 April 1972, Reel 11, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

39. Transcript, 12 January 1972, Reel 7, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

40. Stationery, 6 March 1972, Reel 6, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

41. Marvel Cooke to Howard Moore, 26 January 1972, Angela Davis File-NPL. Cf. Howard Moore to Marvel Cooke, 15 August 1972, Box 43, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard: Upset about payment of his fee. See also "Treasurer's Report," 24 August 1971, Box 43: \$10,000 to Charles Garry law firm for office space; \$8000 to Moore; \$4500 to Sheldon Otis. Cf. Report from Harbus, Margulies & Grobstein to Board of Trustees of Davis Defense, 20 April 1972, Box 44: As of 31 March 1972, there was a balance of "\$50,087.92." See also undated interview with Doris Walker in Box 48: All attorneys in the case, she said, suffered "very substantial financial loss," herself not least since for "eight months I was involved full time" in this case. Cf. Newsletter #6, "Free Angela...", 26 March 1971, Vertical File-Angela Davis, Freedom Archives-Berkeley: Sited at 3450 West 43rd Street, Suite 104 in L.A.: "Increasingly large costs...\$10,000...already been consumed in the past four months." *San Francisco Examiner*, 21 January 1972: \$5000 weekly for lawyers in Davis trial for salaries alone; \$60,000 expended thus far.

42. Winston to Angela Davis, 7 June 1971, Angela Davis File-NPL. See also "On Trial: Angela Davis or America?" with contributions from Ralph David Abernathy, Introduction by Ossie Davis, published by Davis Defense Fund, 1971, 112 West 120th Street in Harlem, which also includes Cyril Phillips, Franklin Alexander, Sallye Davis, Charles Hayes (union leader), the Reverend Melish, George Murphy (scion of prominent Baltimore family with ties to the Black press, William Patterson, Box 1.

Ossie Davis who summed up the historic import of the campaign in saying: "The multinational response involving millions of persons of all creeds, colors and political persuasions to our call and to the call of Angela's party, was an amazing social phenomenon."⁴³ The only point that eluded him was limning his own role in generating this massive response.

This was necessary, for Davis counsel Walker said her firm expected partners to "bring in a gross earning of \$3000 per month," hardly negligible. At that point, Burnham was earning \$1000 per month on this case and Sheldon Otis, \$1500⁴⁴—with Moore and Branton earning even more. For the most part they were serving an appreciative client. "[I] really dig Howard," was her exuberant conclusion in January 1971, for "he & Margaret [Burnham] worked together in SNCC," increasing her comfort level.⁴⁵

At 1:40 p.m. on 27 March 1972, prosecutor Albert Harris made his opening statement. "Beneath the cool academic veneer," he said, Davis was "moved to violence by passion...not to free political prisoners but to free the one prisoner she loved"—the "passion she felt for George Jackson." She wanted to "free George Jackson because she was deeply in love with him." The "defendant considered herself married to George Jackson." He sought to place her alongside Jackson with the yellow van on 6 August, promising that witnesses would testify seeing a woman with "teeth [that] were widely spaced...smoking a small black cigar." He sought to place her at a San Francisco motel room that evening with Jackson. He sought to show that her flight from L.A. then to Chicago by 15 August was evidence of guilt, along with her arrival in Detroit on 17 August (where she bought glasses), then by 4 September in Miami and 28 September in Fort Lauderdale.⁴⁶ In Miami they resided at 2601 NW 115th Street amidst radical

Angela Davis Collection-Clairemont. See also "Angela Davis Legal Defense Fund," ca. 1971, Reel 13, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS. On Ms. Patterson's sojourn in Britain, see George Matthews, editor of *Morning Star* [London] to Gus Hall, 10 March 1971, Box 153, CPUSA Records-NYU: She "made a very big impression" in sessions "attended by over 2500" involving an "exhausting schedule of meetings" including "Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham, Coventry, Edinburgh and Glasgow."

43. Ossie Davis to Sallye Davis, 19 July 1972, Box 43, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard. See also *People's World*, 29 November 1969: Ossie Davis joins Angela Davis in fundraiser for the Communist press. See also "Community of Concern" for David Hilliard, n.d., early 1970s, Reel 61, Black Panther Documents: Ossie Davis played a critical role here alongside Judy Collins, Jean Genet, Pete Seeger, Dwight McDonald, Linus Pauling, St. Clair Drake, Noam Chomsky, Robert Treuhart, and Beverly Axelrod.

44. Minutes of Angela Davis Sub Committee, 16 October 1971, Angela Davis File-NPL.

45. Davis to Aptheker, 7 January 1971, Box 50, Bettina Aptheker Papers. See also Resolution of Trustees on Davis Committee, ca. 1971, Box 43, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard: Burnham to receive \$1000 per month plus \$400 monthly while in San Francisco. Doris Walker to get \$1750 monthly plus \$500 monthly for overhead. Davis's SNCC and Alabama experience shaped her thinking even then. See e.g., Davis to "Dear Mother & Daddy," 5 March 1971, Box 43: Here she recounted an "invasion of a Birmingham defense meeting by local cops" while praising James Forman's book on Sammy Young: an "excellent analysis."

46. Transcript, 27 March 1972, Reel 8, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

books among other items.⁴⁷ In Fort Lauderdale her comrade David Poindexter bought a turquoise Toyota in cash, aided by his mother, June Hunzinger.⁴⁸

This peripatetic course was an abrupt turnabout from how she was spending the first few days of August 1970. She was staying in San Francisco, said her attorney, and spending time on the corner of Missouri and 18th, where the Soledad Brothers had an office. The guns, said Branton, were for protection of that site. She was staying at the home of Juanita Wheeler on nearby Willard Street, who worked at the *People's World* office. She had worked there for more than two decades and had hosted Davis all week. About noon on 7 August, comrade Carl Bloice borrowed her car to take Prof. Davis to the airport, it was said. (Similarly, an attorney—Marvin Stender—was a kind of chauffeur for the academic during that time, driving her from San Francisco to the Berkeley home of Roscoe Procter before 7 August.) Bloice had been an editor at *PW* for three years and had worked there for a dozen years by then. "I have been a Communist for 12 years," he said, an admission on the witness stand that might have been unthinkable two decades earlier. "We were very good friends," he said of Davis. So, about 1 p.m. on 7 August he was said to have driven her to the airport. He was questioned as to whether or not he spoke to her on 15 August—first he said he did not hear from her, then he said he did, leaving the impression that he was not prepared adequately for testimony by counsel. Then he stumbled as to whether he arrived at the airport at 12:45 (yes, 15 minutes before he picked her up) or 1:45.⁴⁹ Even juror Mary Timothy, who voted to acquit, found him to be "not a very good witness...I mistrusted his answers"⁵⁰—leaving the lingering query as to how and why Davis arrived at the airport when she did.

Marcia Lynn Brewer, an airline agent at the airport, was at Gate 34 when the defendant arrived, "seconds before the flight left," she testified. It was a "minute to a minute and a half, if that" before departure. "She was terribly rushed, very

47. Report, 9 October 1970, Reel 5, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS: Recovered were "empty bottles of Jack Daniels whiskey, an empty bottle of Seagram's VO Canadian whiskey, a bottle partially full of Leroux Crème de Menthe."

48. Transcript, 6 October 1971, Reel 3, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS. See *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 15 October 1970: Poindexter denoted as "heir to a substantial fortune." *Village Voice*, 25 February 1971, Reel 57, Black Panther Documents: Poindexter's spouse committed suicide with "one bullet wound in her head." Born in 1933, his father was a Red who wed the former June Guretsky. He was allegedly friendly with Chicago Black Communist leader Ishmael Flory. Charlene Mitchell is quoted: "I was very good friends with him and his wife." Supposedly, Poindexter received a substantial bequest from a deceased uncle, George Gale, and by August 1969 had a nine-room house in the West City.

49. Transcript, 22 May 1972, Reel 12, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS. See Transcript, 30 May 1972, Reel 12: The prosecution did not accept the point that Stender, for example, was driving Davis to San Francisco on 6 August when other witnesses said they saw her at a gas station near the Marin County courthouse.

50. Timothy, *Jury Woman*, 176.

rushed" en route to L.A.⁵¹ The flight was tardy, slated for 2 p.m. but departing at 2:20—with the passenger checking no luggage. Aboard was L.A. cop D.K. McKenzie, ferrying three prisoners.⁵² Like others, she reported, "it would be her teeth that I recognize more than anything else...front space between the two front teeth."⁵³

Davis arrived in L.A. and attended dinner at the home of Ellen Broms, arriving about 6 p.m.⁵⁴ She resided in the Echo Park/Silver Lake area and knew Franklin Alexander from college—both had worked with CORE (Congress of Racial Equality). By 10:30 p.m., Kendra Alexander called with the news about San Rafael. "I can't believe it," exclaimed Davis, "he is so young." And she started to cry, becoming even more upset. She was given a tranquilizer. "My God," she said, "I just bought one...shotgun...in San Francisco a couple of days ago for the defense of the Soledad House."⁵⁵ They rushed across town to 215 W. 45th Street, where she had shared a flat with Valerie Mitchell, also known as Tamu McFalls, in order to inspect a closet where they expected to find weapons. But the cupboard was bare. "Oh shit," says Franklin Alexander. "Oh no," says Davis.⁵⁶ And therewith began two months of fugitivity. (By 14 August there was a raid at this site—apparently without a warrant—with files left strewn around, drawers opened, and worse.⁵⁷)

The mass movement was a crucial factor in rescuing Davis from the dungeon of punishment. By December 1970 there was a defense committee at 43rd and Crenshaw in L.A., sited in three cramped rooms. It was initiated in October, shortly after her capture. Activists were going door-to-door proselytizing in this predominantly Black neighborhood. Said Franklin Alexander, the Seale Committee and those akin to it, "tend to have an all-white character. This campaign, however, tends to be quite the opposite." In fact, these comrades thought their activism could boost Seale. "There's a lot of sentiment," said Alexander, "which has never been organized," and they planned to "connect" the Davis campaign "with the feeling for Seale," to the advantage of both. Quite helpful to the campaigners was the supportive statement from the "Queen of Soul" herself, Aretha Franklin, that she would pay bail for the defendant "even if it were \$250,000." The shrewd Alexander chose to "relate Angela's situation to that of Corky Gonzales, Reies Tejerina and the three Chicanos in San Diego who are

51. Transcript, 10 November 1970, Reel 1, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

52. FBI Report, 21 August 1970, Reel 5, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

53. Transcript, 10 May 1972, Reel 12, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

54. Timothy, *Jury Woman*, 181.

55. Transcript, 23 May 1972, Reel 12, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS. See also lengthy article on Soledad Brothers, *The Black Panther*, 11 July 1970: They had an office at 326 W. 3rd Street in L.A., a Post Office box in Pasadena, and another in San Francisco.

56. Transcript, 22 May 1972, Reel 12, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

57. Transcript, 22 May 1972, Reel 12, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

being charged with 'criminal syndicalism.'"⁵⁸ (Reciprocally, the Panthers circulated widely a "People's Petition Demanding Bail for Angela Davis."⁵⁹) The next month the increasingly famed prisoner was receiving mail in jail painted as being of "avalanche proportions."⁶⁰

By March 1971 the "bulk" of the mail was "so overwhelming," she marveled that "the people here had given up all hopes of censoring it."⁶¹ As the trial was ending, a journalist marveled at how the "mass defense flooded [the] judge and Attorney General with hundreds of thousands of letters," while "tens of thousands of dollars" were raised by the defense.⁶²

By the time the defendant's mother spoke in L.A. on her behalf, at the Elks Hall at Santa Barbara and Central, 300 assembled, making for standing room only. The overflow retreated to the parking lot and Ms. Davis stood on a table to speak—despite a bomb threat. Hosting were prominent clerics, including H.H. Brookins.⁶³ The previous years of unrest and radicalism notwithstanding, retrograde forces remained: For example, nearby Inglewood had been a lily-white town until a few years before this troubling incident, and before that had been a stronghold for the Ku Klux Klan.⁶⁴

If Leo Branton was the key figure inside the courtroom, beyond those confines it was Alexander—and Charlene Mitchell—who were preeminent. In October 1971, 700 attended a public tribunal that found Magee and Davis not guilty. The jury had a median age of about 26 years of age and represented teachers, former convicts, social workers and laborers—with Alexander playing

58. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 18 December 1970. On Aretha Franklin see also *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 17 December 1970. Black progressives thought they had reason to believe that elites sought to play off Blacks against Chicanos—and vice versa—necessitating shrewder tactics. Cf. Statement by Robert Singleton, 5 August 1970, Box 7, Robert Singleton Papers: "When the Black students at UCLA demanded a Black Stud[ies] program and submitted a sophisticated proposal...administrators deliberately solicited the other minorities to submit [a] similar proposal, and stalled until a facsimile for Asian-Americans, Native Americans and Chicanos was submitted.... considered it easier to deal with four than with one minority group.... predictable that the Blacks would develop some resentment over this delay"—and predictably, a myriad of splits occurred.

59. *The Black Panther*, 5 June 1971.

60. "Free Angela" newsletter, 15 January 1971, Box 3, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard. In Box 55, Aptheker to Davis, 23 January 1971: Maya Angelou joins the defense.

61. Davis to "Dear Mother & Daddy," 5 March 1971, Box 43, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

62. *People's World*, 3 June 1972. See also *Guardian*, ca. May 1971, FCSF F2 3 100, CSU-Fullerton: "Support from abroad has been overwhelming. All the socialist countries," said the defendant. "I receive from 100 to 400 letters a day."

63. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 15 July 1971. See also "Free Angela" tabloid, 1 August 1971, FCSF F2 3 100, CSU-Fullerton: "Discovery of a powerful dynamite bomb on the lawn of Dr. Timothy C. Jackson in Altadena...forced cancellation" of benefit for Davis featuring singer Carmen McRae, the Charles Owen Quintet and actor William Marshall. "Dr. Jackson almost literally stumbled over the dynamite bomb...set to detonate at 6 PM—one hour after the event was to have begun.... two weeks previous...July 18 a rally in South Central...had to be moved because of the bomb threat." Because of the recent bombing of a left-leaning radio station by anti-Castro Cubans, nerves were frazzled.

64. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 13 April 1972.

the leading role.⁶⁵ Then he was found alongside Charlene Mitchell, Bettina Aptheker, Davis's sister Fania and 20 others picketing the courthouse, and all were arrested.⁶⁶

The Davis case took on worldwide significance but it was also a California case. And this was so not only in the Bay Area, where the case was tried, and the L.A. vicinity, the residence of Davis and the Jackson brothers too, but San Diego as well. The UCSD administration warily followed the import of the case involving their alumna. In La Jolla, as early as May 1970, Students for a Democratic Society blocked the chancellor from entering his office in protest of his posture on her UCLA post; they also broke about 50 windows.⁶⁷ Chancellor Herbert York of UCSD, who as a physicist was part of the team that developed the atomic bomb, grudgingly acknowledged the explosive reality he confronted on campus given the substantial backing on his campus not only from Marcuse and his many followers⁶⁸ but the Black Student Union as well.⁶⁹ Reagan crony Max Rafferty said that Marcuse and Kalish of UCLA "should immediately resign," but venom was directed at the UCSD professor especially, since he was her "mentor and guru" who "made her what she is today"—though both "should be completely severed" from the faculty.⁷⁰ He was hardly assuaged when Marcuse appeared alongside Davis's lawyer Michael Tigar at a noon rally at UCLA in early 1971, which 4000 attended, and that was duplicated at City Hall.⁷¹

Again, the breakneck construction of campuses in California, accelerating under Reagan's predecessor, Gov. "Pat" Brown, was a constitutive factor in fomenting Black radicalism on campuses. Among other campuses, Davis was elected as Homecoming Queen at Laney College in Oakland, while jailed.⁷²

Beating up on Marcuse became a proxy for those seeking to undermine Davis, the professoriate more generally and the left in particular. The noteworthy conservative intellectual Russell Kirk asked his vast audience, "Who formed Angela's mind?" And answered, "A dull professor who writes the worst prose...filled with hatred"—plus, he was "pompous" and "arrogant": Marcuse, in short. His saving grace? He was "detested by the Soviet Russians." But it was this professor—not Jim Crow Alabama—that ignited her "racial resentments."⁷³ Yet

65. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 21 October 1971.

66. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 10 February 1972.

67. Clipping, 29 May 1970, Box 246, Chancellor Subject Files.

68. *San Diego Union*, 22 March 1971, Box 246, Chancellor Subject Files.

69. *San Diego Sentinel*, 10 January 1971, Box 246, Chancellor Subject Files.

70. *San Diego Union*, 20 August 1970, Box 246, Chancellor Subject Files. See also *Los Angeles Times*, 9 October 1969: Gov. Reagan denounces Kalish and Chancellor Young of UCLA.

71. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 29 January 1971.

72. *People's World*, 14 November 1970. See also Correspondence from future Harvard Law School professor and then Stanford student Charles Ogletree, 14 January 1972, Series 2, Box 41, Newton Foundation: Concerning Students for the Defense of Davis and All Political Prisoners.

73. *San Diego Union*, 27 July 1971, Box 246, Chancellor Subject Files.

this assault did not prevent 2000 gathering in Philadelphia to hear this “dull professor” speak at the University of Pennsylvania.⁷⁴

Marcuse was forced to deny that he had offered Davis employment upon being released on bail; he simply said he would “continue to supervise” her thesis if she were to be released on bail.⁷⁵ Earlier Marcuse had complained that an “outright forgery” circulating on campus and attributed to him was designed evilly to blame so-called “Chicano riots” on him.⁷⁶

Needless to say, all of this was boosting the CP, ideologically not least, which could be detected in the Black press. Thus, *Sentinel* reporter Emily Gibson—clearly a woman of the left—began to provide learned expositions on how “racism is [the] tool of the real enemy-capitalism.”⁷⁷ It was Gibson who apprised her readers of the “most publicized political trial...in the annals of American history,” referring to Davis’s travail, and “one of the most outrageous frame-ups in the history of the country.”⁷⁸

Early in the trial, her attorney, Margaret Burnham, argued for a larger courtroom. Why? There was global interest in the proceedings, she said, in that “hundreds if not thousands of reporters...seek admittance to these proceedings.... President Nixon can attest to the interest which this case has aroused among dignitaries...for [he] invited 14 scientists from the Soviet Union...to attend.” In response to the prosecutor alleging that there were now “20 empty seats” in the courtroom, Burnham contended that at a previous hearing “400 people [were] outside waiting to get in.”⁷⁹ Whipping up this pro-Davis sentiment in Moscow was her comrade with like roots in Birmingham. James Jackson addressed a crowd of 1000 there about nine months before her acquittal.⁸⁰ The conservative press in San Diego was displeased to report that a new Soviet-generated rose with a delicate scent was named in the defendant’s honor.⁸¹ Jackson then moved on to Kerala, the Indian state with a sizable Communist Party intermittently in

74. *San Diego Union*, 29 April 1971, Box 246, Chancellor Subject Files. Cf. Handwritten “order” re: Marcuse and spouse seeking to speak with Davis, 4 February 1971, Reel 1.

75. *Los Angeles Times*, 22 March 1971, Box 246, Chancellor Subject Files.

76. Marcuse to *Triton Times*, 10 November 1970, Box 246, Chancellor Subject Files.

77. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 13 January 1972: She termed Cultural Nationalism as embodied by Karenga “reactionary,” involving an “incorrect assessment” that “embraced male chauvinism...black capitalism,” in sum: “hogwash.”

78. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 23 March 1972.

79. Transcript, 9 March 1971, Reel 2, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

80. Report, 2 October 1971, Angela Davis File, NPL. See also Georg Lukács to Aptheker, 20 January 1971, Box 51, Bettina Aptheker Papers: This prominent Hungarian intellectual reported on pro-Davis protests in the region, including hearing from “Comrade Berlinguer” about same in Italy, then leader of likely the largest and most influential CP in the capitalist world. See also Pamphlet from German Democratic Republic, “Free Angela Davis: Hero of the Other America,” ca. 1971, Box 1, Angela Davis Collection-Claumont. See also Free Angela cards, mostly from Eastern Europe, 1971-1972, Box 475, CPUSA Records-NYU.

81. *San Diego Union*, 30 June 1972, Box 246, Chancellor Subject Files.

government, where he addressed a meeting of 300,000. He also assailed atrocities in an emerging Bangladesh (an opportunity likely to evade Panthers because of their denunciation of the Indian ally in Moscow, to this day viewed as a shield against lances from across the border in China.)⁸² University students in Delhi, too, were active in Davis' defense.⁸³

Black artists and intellectuals weighed in from abroad. James Baldwin in France said he was "more than anxious to do anything I can."⁸⁴ This included a financial contribution.⁸⁵ His artistic peer—prominent sculptor Elizabeth Catlett, then residing in Mexico—was initiating a Davis committee there "involving so far," she said, "women, university professors...students...intellectuals."⁸⁶ Her impact was felt when Mexicans and Venezuelans were among those a journalist described as "Angry Latin Americans" who demanded the defendant's freedom.⁸⁷ Included in this category was Luis Figueroa, a leader of the Communist Party in Chile, who visited her behind bars, about 18 months before his nation was turned upside down by a U.S.-backed coup against an elected Socialist Party-led regime.⁸⁸

Their artistic peer—playwright, novelist, and biographer Shirley Graham Du Bois—writing from Cairo reported on her mobilization campaign.⁸⁹

82. Report, 10 October 1971, Angela Davis File-NPL. Cf. Kathleen Cleaver to Mr. "Pillai," 14 August 1972, Box 1, Cleaver-TAMU: "Comrades in South India..."

83. Students in Delhi to Prime Minister of India, 24 September 1971, Box 50, Bettina Aptheker Papers. See also Davis and Wiener, *Set the Night on Fire*, 407: Pro-Davis protests, "in Ceylon [Sri Lanka] a three day vigil by 2500 women in front of the American embassy; in Sydney, Australia, a march by 700 women." *New York Times*, 15 March 1972: United States Information Agency "seeks to counter idea Miss Davis is persecuted" with a "worldwide campaign.... 20 member all white agency task force to handle the Davis case."

84. James Baldwin to Aptheker, 14 October 1971, Box 50, Bettina Aptheker Papers.

85. Gloria Karefa-Smart to the Davises, 15 March 1971, Box 44, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard: "My brother [James] Baldwin asked me to send the enclosed check to you."

86. Elizabeth Catlett to Aptheker, 3 February 1971, Box 50, Bettina Aptheker Papers.

87. *People's World*, 1 May 1971.

88. *The Black Panther*, 11 March 1972.

89. Shirley Graham Du Bois to Aptheker, 3 February 1972, Box 50, Bettina Aptheker Papers.

As to be expected, Jane Fonda was active in Davis's defense.⁹⁰ They had appeared together previously at a rally for the Soledad Brothers⁹¹ and suggested that she could recruit chanteuse Nina Simone for a pro-Davis "telethon."⁹² She also visited the jailed defendant.⁹³ Rising feminist icon Gloria Steinem called Prof. Davis "a brave sister."⁹⁴

Fellow entertainer Sammy Davis, Jr. was photographed wearing a "Free Angela" button,⁹⁵ while fellow Black icon, the Reverend Jesse Jackson, visited her in jail.⁹⁶ The diminutive entertainer did not just flash a button. In February 1972 he joined Aretha Franklin, Donald Sutherland, and Quincy Jones at a fundraiser for the campaign at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles.⁹⁷ In her previous contestation with UCLA, Prof. Davis received "very strong support" from the leading Black elected official, Mervyn Dymally, who expressed his

90. Jane Fonda to Aptheker, 19 February 1971, Box 50, Bettina Aptheker Papers. See also film about the defendant: *Los Angeles Free Press*, 16 February 1972: Yolande du Luart created the film on Davis, *Portrait of a Revolutionary*, and showed it to her in jail. "I was so nervous I couldn't thread the projector," she said, "so Angela did it herself. She's very good at mechanical things." There were "tears in her eyes" as she watched: "She liked the film." Cf. David Lubell to "Dear Huey," 6 November 1970, Reel 10, Black Panther Documents: Counsel Burnham says Prof. Davis doesn't want film distributed. Burnham to "Comrade Huey," 1 December 1970, Reel 30: Apologizes re: film. Du Luart to "Dear Huey," 6 November 1970, Reel 30: Burnham from "public telephone" at Davis jail says her client does not want film shown.

91. Doris Walker to Jane Fonda, 17 November 1971, Box 48, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard. Thome to Fonda, 21 December 1970, Box 101, Thome Papers: "Thank you not only for your tremendous work in the Soledad benefits in New York."

92. Fonda to Walker, 24 January 1972, Box 48, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard. See also *People's World*, 24 October 1970. Communist Carl Bloice attacks Fonda's future spouse, Tom Hayden, after he purportedly said that "mass political defense" is a waste and that simply "prisoners should be sprung."

93. *People's World*, 13 March 1971. In the same edition, note: Although all were not listed as Davis supporters, it is striking that Fonda was among those who were involved in a massive antiwar protest. The list included 53 unions, James Coburn, Burt Bacharach, Dick Gregory, Rock Hudson, Roger Vadim, Rafer Johnson, Natalie Wood, Julie Andrews, Roscoe Lee Brown, Peter Boyle, Angie Dickerson, Blake Edwards, Ryan O'Neal, Tuesday Weld, Haskell Wexler, Donald Sutherland, Jon Voight, Tom Smothers. Trumbo chaired, and also present was key BPP backer, Burt Schneider. See also "Louise" to Eldridge Cleaver, 11 February 1972, Box 1, Cleaver-TAMU: Trumbo noted as "one of the people who has been supportive of the Panthers...hosted a party at his home for Genet." Also, part of the Hollywood left was the son of actor Sterling Hayden. See Chronology, 1967, Box 2, Los Angeles Resistance Collection-LAPL: see notes on Christian Hayden. In Box 4, see material on Christian Hayden and draft resistance. See also "Louise" to Eldridge Cleaver, 16 March 1972, Box 1, Cleaver-TAMU: Daughter of Hollywood's Burt Lancaster headed to Algiers.

94. *Los Angeles Times*, 21 October 1970.

95. *People's World*, 24 April 1971.

96. *People's World*, 13 February 1971.

97. *People's World*, 26 February 1972.

"admiration" for her "brave and courageous" stand⁹⁸—and this support hardly wilted post-August 1970.

An active pro-Davis committee in France involved Pablo Picasso, Louis Aragon and Alain Robbe-Grillet, who communicated their protest directly to Gov. Reagan.⁹⁹ (In a well-circulated "Open Letter to Black High School Students," Davis suggested that the governor be contacted about her plight.¹⁰⁰) "World Communist Movement Rallies to Free" Davis, read a typical headline, illustrated by a march to the U.S. embassy in Paris led by French Communists.¹⁰¹ By December 1971, her sister Fania addressed 60,000 in France, part of a six-week tour of Europe with 36 mass rallies, press conferences, meetings and the like.¹⁰²

In London, Aptheker told her comrade that she even found the influential *New York Times* columnist Anthony Lewis to be "very sympathetic to you."¹⁰³ Naturally, young Communists were on the march in solidarity.¹⁰⁴ Veteran Harlem activist Louise Thompson Patterson spoke in eight British cities on her behalf.¹⁰⁵ Symptomatic in Italy was the support the case received from eminent filmmaker Pier Paolo Pasolini.¹⁰⁶ It is not evident that his peer cineaste Ingmar Bergman expressed support for the defendant but it was evident that the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation sought to interview Professor Davis—along with Jacqueline Casselberry of CBS News, Earl Caldwell of the *New York Times*, and various other filmmakers.¹⁰⁷ "I try to avoid artificial modesty,"¹⁰⁸ Davis once told Jackson, but it was not easy to avoid the state of being unassuming when one's face is plastered on magazine covers globally.

98. Dymally statement, 15 October 1969, Box 8, Robert Singleton Papers. See Davis to Dymally, 29 October 1969, Mervyn Dymally Papers: He is invited to speak at "Negro Leadership Conference.... I hope that my presentation proves to be as interesting as the topic 'Man and the State' suggest."

99. Davis Committee to Governor Reagan, 27 October 1971, Box 50, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard. On Picasso and Aragon, see *People's World*, 31 July 1971.

100. Davis, "An Open Letter to Black High School Students," 23 March 1971, Box 1, Angela Davis Collection-Claremont.

101. *People's World*, 21 November 1970.

102. *People's World*, 4 December 1971. The French writer Jean Genet was a stalwart backer of Davis. See Judy Gringer to Elaine Brown, 13 October 1971, Reel 13, Black Panther Documents: "I met you in Los Angeles in February 1970. I was working...as Genet's translator. You and I and Genet attended several depressing cocktail parties to raise money for the Panthers.... express my resentment over the way I have been treated by the Panthers."

103. Aptheker to Davis, 1 July 1971, Box 56, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

104. *People's World*, 21 November 1970.

105. *People's World*, 27 March 1971. On Ms. Patterson's sojourn in Britain, see George Matthews, editor of *Morning Star* [London] to Gus Hall, 10 March 1971, Box 153, CPUSA Records-NYU: She "made a very big impression" in sessions "attended by over 2500" involving an "exhausting schedule of meetings" including "Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham, Coventry, Edinburgh and Glasgow."

106. *People's World*, 12 December 1970.

107. Transcript, 9 June 1971, Reel 1, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

108. Davis to Jackson, 22 June 1970, Reel 11, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

These other foreign climes aside, Prof. Davis spoke the truth when she arrived in Moscow shortly after her acquittal and proclaimed, "without Russia I would not be free."¹⁰⁹ By implication, this also could have applied to the German Democratic Republic, which weighed in heavily on her behalf.¹¹⁰ A competitor for this vaunted role could be Cuba, which Davis had visited. Interestingly, just after she was detained, the Communist organ reprinted a 1969 picture of her toiling in the sugar fields there.¹¹¹ While still jailed in Manhattan, a Havana-based tricontinental grouping proclaimed their "support" for the "Afro-American people's solidarity" with Davis.¹¹² This global support was likely lubricated by the profound backing she received from Black soldiers, not least abroad during an unpopular war in Indochina. By May 1971, a public statement was made on her behalf by over 400 soldiers, mostly Black with roots in practically all of the 50 states; they linked her freedom to that of Bobby Seale.¹¹³

By January 1972 Davis supporters were arrested at the courthouse, which relieved pressure in a courtroom that seated about 59 with approximately half for the press.¹¹⁴ And those press seats got a real workout. The Negro reporter, A.S. "Doc" Young, no fan of the defendant, still conceded that "enough has been written about this case to fill a small library."¹¹⁵ Her attorney, Sheldon Otis, referred to a Reagan cabinet member, Max Rafferty, calling his client a "fugitive gun moll" with such negative depictions often inscribed in the "two or three thousand articles which have been written concerning this case," with almost a year to go before acquittal.¹¹⁶

* * *

The UCLA controversy already had made Professor Davis something of a public figure, if not a celebrity—that most exalted U.S. status. Yet, as noted, her comrades were not convinced that hers was a case worth building upon, its potential notwithstanding. The gunplay was one consideration, and her reluctance to distance herself altogether from it was another. The left-leaning attorney William Kunstler of New York City, who handled his share of Panther cases, was among those who found her party membership and the "movement" to be

109. Remarks by Davis, 29 August 1972, Reel 14, Black Panther Documents.

110. "Peace, Friendship, Solidarity...Angela Davis in the GDR," 10-17 September 1972, with Franklin and Kendra Alexander, Reel 13, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

111. *People's World*, 24 October 1970.

112. *The Black Panther*, 28 November 1970, and 5 December 1970.

113. *The Black Panther*, 15 May 1971.

114. Transcript, 31 January 1972, Reel 7, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

115. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 26 November 1970.

116. Transcript, 22 July 1971, Reel 3, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

"irreconcilable"—a point that Davis's attorney and fellow Red, Doris Walker, found to be "outrageous in its divisiveness, chauvinism and arrogance."¹¹⁷

It did seem, however, that her CP comrades too had reservations, albeit of a differing variety. An internal analysis recalled that the leadership did not issue a statement until 28 August and, it was said, "denied that it was a revolutionary act." They "failed to state" that she was a party member, while Northern California issued no statement at all—until she was detained in October, viewed as a "grievous political error." The "silence of the party was deafening." The precursor to 7 August was the fatal beating of a Black prisoner at San Quentin, Fred Billingslea, in February, seen as a trigger, if not a rationale, for the August tumult and justifying it too—according to this analysis.¹¹⁸ This breach in the party prefigured a wider one about two decades later when Davis, Aptheker—daughter and father—Charlene Mitchell, James Jackson and others departed the CP in the wake of the flux introduced by the collapse of the Soviet Union.¹¹⁹

A party critic, Peter Shapiro, rebuked the comrades for supposedly adopting the viewpoint to "not advocate the use of armed force" while choosing not "to disown" the younger Jackson at the same time.¹²⁰

As the prospect of execution hung ominously over Prof. Davis's head, she seemed to be increasingly distressed by what appeared to be the less than fulsomely full-throated embrace of her case. By early 1972 Aptheker was consulting with her and found her to be "very concerned about how we posit the question of her membership in the party." The defendant didn't "like formulations [e.g. 'no Communist could have']" been involved in 7 August. The "reason is her belief that her disagreement with [the CP] on various questions including August 17 is too well known and that if prosecution brings this out it will undermine her credibility" (though given the incompetence of prosecution, they could be depended upon to fail to pursue this route). Apparently, the defendant's relationship with her comrade attorney, Doris Walker, was not ideal either. "It is not good at all," said Aptheker, speaking of their relations. "She is abrupt and hard with her" and feels [Walker] is very insensitive to her."¹²¹ (I knew Walker—popularly known as "Dobbie"; we collaborated for years within the ranks of the

117. Doris Walker to Mickie Lima, 9 November 1970, Angela Davis File-NPL. See *People's World*, 31 October 1970: Kunstler suggests that Davis was "torn between the old-line theory and her friendship with Black people" since the CP was "against the young and their revolutionary activity." See also Nadelson, *Who is Angela Davis?*, 9: Kunstler says that the CP is "against the young...she [Davis] must make a choice."

118. Undated report, early 1970s, Angela Davis File-NPL.

119. Mitchell has been termed Davis's "Political Godmother": Transcript, 1972, Box 46, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard.

120. Analysis by Peter Shapiro, early 1970s, Angela Davis File-NPL. It is unclear, but CP leader Mickie Lima may have had a hand in shaping this analysis. See the latter's 10 March 1972 analysis at the same site, still wrestling with 7 August as the trial of Davis unfurled.

121. Bettina Aptheker to Mickie Lima, 11 January 1972, Angela Davis File-NPL.

National Lawyers Guild. We got along well, but her blunt style could easily be misinterpreted, particularly, I imagine, in the context of a criminal trial).

However, the mass support Davis was accumulating was hard to ignore in formulating an analysis. Without revealing sources, the *Los Angeles Times* reported dubiously, shortly after she was captured in October 1970, that the CP told her not to flee to Cuba or Algeria but to remain in the U.S. as a "rallying point" and this paid dividends since "now the party has a star."¹²² It was similarly hard to ignore union backing, especially in the San Francisco Bay Area, which was impressive, including Raoul Teillet, president of the California Federation of Teachers, and Cleophas Brown, who served as coordinator of the Trade Union Committee for Defense of Davis.¹²³ In backing her, the influential stevedores recalled the similarly controversial case of Tom Mooney, decades earlier, which also implicated violence—a bombing in that instance.¹²⁴ In Los Angeles, construction workers donated \$1000 to the campaign.¹²⁵

Thus, by early June 1971, CP Chairman Henry Winston called upon "all members...districts...commissions" to combine for the "necessity of an all out fight on the question of bail" for Davis,¹²⁶ which was victorious after niggling issues involving co-defendant Magee were addressed. His call in turn helped to accelerate support globally from Communist parties and their allies, who saw an opportunity to launch a blow against U.S. imperialism and its acolytes, white supremacy and male supremacy. Nevertheless, thereafter Winston prevailed upon Davis to ponder the party's "collective thinking" on 7 August and to absorb the work of Lenin, especially that of 1898, "Two Tasks of Russian Social Democrats."¹²⁷

Even in June, when Winston was calling for all-out support for the case, he admitted that "rough discussion" continued to ensue about San Rafael and its discontents.¹²⁸ This meant that Winston responded diplomatically to her taking exception to his analysis, wherein she called it a "very heavy blow" that left her "stunned."¹²⁹

Davis was furious about the suggestion that 7 August was "adventurist, anarchistic, terrorist, elitist...deserving of nothing but scorn." Where was the

122. *Los Angeles Times*, 17 October 1970.

123. Raoul Teillet to Cleophas Brown, 22 July 1971, Angela Davis File-NPL.

124. ILWU Resolution, April 1971, Angela Davis File-NPL.

125. *People's World*, 18 November 1971.

126. Winston memo, 4 June 1971, Angela Davis File-NPL.

127. Winston to Davis, 8 November 1971, Angela Davis File-NPL.

128. Winston to Lima, 7 June 1971, Angela Davis File-NPL.

129. Winston to Davis, 7 June 1971, Angela Davis File-NPL. Evidently, her attorney, Branton, was in accord with Winston in that he thought his client should "disclaim" San Rafael as "terroristic"; however, he also drew a distinction between defending Davis as a Communist and defending the CP itself: Memo, 17 January 1972, Box 48, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard. In the same box cf. Notes on Winston and the Defense, 23 September 1971, and see also Aptheker to Walker, 25 September 1971: Split between Moore and CP on defense and the consideration of Winston as a witness.

discussion of the slain McClain and Christmas, akin to the "total absence of discussion on the prison movement itself." These "were not petty bourgeois anarchists," contrary to gathering opinion among some comrades. She repeated Magee's claim that the assailants intended to "reach a radio station" to expose baneful prison conditions. Her 18-page rebuttal rebuked "dogmatism" in rejecting the analogy to slave insurrections. There was undue focus on Cleaver too, she said, toward whom she shared animus.¹³⁰

Dialectically, even a crisis—as this certainly was—can deliver clarity. Winston clarified that although he disagreed with San Rafael as a tactic, obviously this did not mean he felt the youthful Jackson should have been killed. CP leader Lima was moved to flights of rhetoric in terming 1776—per the consensus—as "liberating," with no mention of enslavement being strengthened, let alone the acceleration of Indigenous dispossession.¹³¹

This was the nub of the matter, per Roscoe Procter: The difficulty faced by descendants of the unpaid sector of the working class, in accepting the good faith of settler descendants, inexorably contributed to the execution of San Rafael, as a kind of shortcut to liberation.

Winston visited the defendant in jail in December 1970 and came away with the news that she was receiving 100 letters daily and at times 400 from the U.S. and overseas—but no necessary meeting of the minds about the political meaning of San Rafael.¹³²

1300. Davis reply to Winston via Aptheker, ca. 1971, Box 50, Bettina Aptheker Papers. See Winston attack on Cleaver: *People's World*, 13 February 1971. See Carl Bloice on Cleaver and Davis: *People's World*, 23 January 1971. Magee had incurred the wrath of the authorities when he protested what the Panthers termed "the exploitative two cents an hour wage of state prisoners," *The Black Panther*, 12 June 1971. Remarks of William Brent, 1976, Reel 12, Black Panther Documents: This Panther in exile in Cuba raised the question of "union wages for the prisoners...very interested in the...union movement now, especially the rank and file of the Steelworkers Union." See *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 21 December 1972: Trial of Magee had now cost about \$150,000 when the "average criminal trial" amounted to \$5000, much spent on security. Cf. George Jackson to "Comrade Huey," 4 February 1971, Reel 41, Black Panther Documents: "[I] would like to contribute something to the paper every week...if you want to use me to say nasty things about those who deserve it.... did you know that Angela and I were married a while back? And I had almost pulled her all the way into our camp, just before Eldridge made that statement...I had done so well in fact that CP tried to cut our contacts, attacked my sanity in little whispers...beautiful, hard disciplined brothers in here, I'd like to deliver them to you some day." Cf. Jackson to Newton, 21 February 1971, Reel 15: "I don't need an editor...try to memorize my handwriting, that is how all messages will come in the future...is Fay [Stender] CP?...she has no control at all of her mouth. Or ego." Cf. Pearlman, *Call Me Phaedra*, 442-445, on the attempted murder of Fay Stender. See also Andrews, *Black Power*, 251: Edward Brooks accused of shooting Stender.

1311. Undated, unsourced Report, Angela Davis File-NPL.

1312. *People's World*, 9 January 1971. This avalanche of correspondence was generated in part by massive press coverage, which was noted in the courtroom: See Transcript, 20 November 1971, Reel 4. Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS: Howard Moore notes his client being on the cover of the wildly popular *LIFE* magazine of 11 September 1970.

Thus, in September 1971, shortly after the slaying of George Jackson, the party's highest body again took up the Davis case and her message that "not all the leading comrades who spoke with her were fully frank"—or so reported Aptheker—"leaving her with the impression of agreement when there was not really agreement." Just as the defendant had problems with Walker, she found Charlene Mitchell to be "too rigid and when they got together they fussed and argued too much." A result that emerged with "unanimous opinion" was a shakeup of staffing, and that may not have been a plus: SNCC leader Ivanhoe Donaldson (future top aide to Mayor Marion Barry of Washington, D.C.) "should not be on the staff at all"¹³³ was the conclusion, his organizing acumen notwithstanding. These ousters and concomitant wrangling were likely a result of the tense atmosphere delivered by a case that could have eventuated with the death penalty.

Before this shakeup, the Communist organ tackled the writings of George Jackson. They were praiseworthy—"Jackson has schooled himself in those writers who have become the most widely read of all among many of today's Black prison population—Marx, Lenin, Che...Ho, Mao, Cleaver, Newton, Giani, Fanon and Angela Davis." However, they raised concerns about his invocation of "armed struggle."¹³⁴

* * *

In August 1971 George Jackson was slain in prison under dubious circumstances, a shattering blow administered to Davis in the middle of her trial. This was followed by prison uprisings, most famously at Attica in upstate New York but, alas, like the mailed fist administered to the Panthers of which he was a member, this iron repression was a crushing rebuke to a radical upsurge that had arisen seemingly with the erosion of Jim Crow. What emerged was a kind of stasis, then a declension, beginning with the election of Ronald Reagan as president in 1980, which provided a further boost to a conservative—if not ultra-rightist—ascendancy.

133. Minutes of Political Committee Discussion, 7 September 1971, Angela Davis File-NPL. See also Dorothy Healey, Oral History: Davis "called me to come up to see her when she was in San Rafael and complained bitterly about the conduct of the defense, particularly of Franklin Alexander. But when she came out on bail, when she was herself more involved, I think she was very much taken in by the enormous newspaper and magazine publicity...the mythology that that this was a tremendously well organized mass campaign was just a lot of nonsense...great sums of money...raised" notwithstanding. 134. *People's World*, 5 December 1970. According to Healey, there were also differences between Jackson and the BPP that rarely "surfaced," Dorothy Healey, Oral History.

As a result, in her opening statement to the jury in her trial,¹³⁵ Davis met the prosecution argument about her love for Jackson driving her to crime head-on. She rejected this "crime of passion" rationale and its companion: As "a woman" she was "supposed to act in accordance with the dictates of...emotions and passions." Actually, she said, her involvement with the Soledad Brothers began "long before I had any contact" with Jackson "as a person." She spoke of her ties to the "Black Student Council" at UCSD as a token of her activism, along with the "Black Student Alliance, the Black Congress," SNCC, the BPP and Che Lumumba—in other words, even before encountering Jackson she was enmeshed deeply in struggle. "I contributed to the movement to free the 18 members of the Black Panther Party" and even then, "I was the object of an extensive spying campaign." Yet the prosecution says, "I was a mere creature of passion." If the prosecution had consulted their "whole network of spies" who tracked her, they would rethink this approach. It was true, she said, that "I spent much time visiting in the home of the Jackson family," and "members of the Jackson family visited in my home," but during the UCLA crisis there were "constant threats on my life"—"hundreds and thousands of threats," she stressed—and it was "not safe for me to travel any distance in Los Angeles outside the company of others." Hence, "Jonathan Jackson and [herself] were often together" and, in any case, "my experience with guns dates back into my childhood" since living in Alabama "my father had to keep guns in the house." So, she bought guns, and "it was often I who paid for weapons which were used by others," which led her to "go target practicing."¹³⁶

Nevertheless, it is undeniable that upon receiving the news of George Jackson's death, the defendant cried out that this meant "the loss of an irretrievable love."¹³⁷ Georgia Jackson, the mother of the deceased, who had lost two sons within a year, was beyond grief-stricken bereavement and issued a

135. Thorne to Lars Hellstrom, 16 January 1973, Box 101, Thorne Papers: After Davis's arrest in Manhattan, said Thorne, he "immediately urged her to consider representing herself," though it is likely this would have occurred even without his sage counsel: "Jurors get a much closer and warmer feeling about Angela."

136. *People's World*, 15 April 1972. Cf. *The Black Panther*, 7 December 1974, Black Student Alliance: "Progressive organization made up of high school, college and university" matriculants.

137. *People's World*, 28 August 1971. See her statement on Jackson's death: *The Black Panther*, 23 August 1971. See also Davis to "Dearest Comrade," 22 November 1971, Series 2, Box 41, Newton Foundation: In this apparent letter to Newton, the author refers to his visits to her being blocked, so she plans "to do something drastic....so much I'd like to go over with you.... Elaine told you, I assume, that when I met with George five days [sic] before he was struck down, I promised him that I would discuss with you a few point[s]." It was positive that Bob Dylan did a song about Jackson but why didn't a Black artist do it? "All the sisters here really love you, as they all loved George." See also David Lubell to Newton, 22 November 1971, Reel 40, Black Panther Documents: "In view of the discussion you had a number of months ago with Bob Dylan."

lament for Black mothers that echoed through the ages.¹³⁸ It was a story of pathos and bathos, political implications aside, and it was inevitable that at a certain point James Baldwin, the protean writer, would become "very anxious to work on the screenplay" since "it could make quite a shattering film." He was eager too, since it "may be wise for me not to count too heavily on being allowed to remain in France." Priming the pump, he was angling to write about this dramatic case in *Le Monde* but again he made it clear he was "anxious to begin exploiting the film medium."¹³⁹

In some ways, the prosecution was snookered. Apparently unaware of changing norms introduced by feminism, they seized upon Davis's often passionate words about George Jackson to find a motive for her purported participation in 7 August. But in her opening statement, Davis counterpunched, portraying her courtroom opponent as a sexist troglodyte, a captive of the past. As detailed below, when the state arranged for the two inmates—Davis and Jackson—to meet face-to-face weeks before his slaying and they embraced each other passionately and unreservedly even as prying eyes looked on, the prosecution thought they had uncovered the final chapter in her conviction;¹⁴⁰ instead, it was just another prelude to acquittal.

138. Testimony of Georgia Jackson, 15 November 1971, Reel 5, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS: "I don't believe in God any more. I don't believe in anything any more.... I sit and watch my little grandchildren cry at night. They can't eat; we can't sleep.... I [have] always been poor and Black and made to feel...inferior...I've lost all faith in human beings.... I wish I were dead right now...why should I have to be miserable? Why should I have to suffer like this?...I don't know anything about any conspiracies...I don't care if I died right here on this floor...these stupid...questions...I'm an innocent bystander...what is the truth?... I'm a mother, nothing else. Nobody tells a mother anything. All a mother does is suffer after everything happens.... I'm not going to take part in any court of law any more because I...think they're just [here to] torment me.... I went to mass everyday nearly for four years, praying for my son in prison.... I don't hardly know what my name is...I can't even function as a normal human being any more...go on and kill me. Put me in jail...I don't care if I'm dead...I would like to go home and die in peace." See also Interview with Georgia Jackson, January 1971, Ron Wilkins Papers: Her son Jonathan "never...ran around the streets, never had [ties to] any gangs.... humiliation of the FBI following me when I'm burying my boy...they were across the street in a parking lot taking pictures." However, at a certain point she and her son "started talking about revolution." Cf. George Jackson to Penny Jackson, 26 June 1969, Series 2, Box 42, Newton Foundation: "Try helping him," referring to his younger brother, "he needs it...he, like most of us males [has] a very special problem, his is worse because of his physical appearance."

139. James Baldwin to John Thorne, 30 November 1970, Box 16, Thorne Papers. See also *Le Monde*, 28 October 1970, Series 2, Box 41, Newton Foundation, Genet on Davis: "They're going to try to kill her"; he thinks "continually" of her, recalling that during his tour of the U.S., she was his interpreter.

140. Transcript, 8 July 1971, Reel 5, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS: "Immediately they came together in what can only be described as a lascivious embrace lasting...approximately ten minutes.... both parties took delight in fondling each other with the obvious intention [to] sexually arouse the other.... Miss Davis and inmate Jackson utilized almost of their approximately two and one-half hour period in their quarters embracing, kissing and on several occasions it appeared Jackson was biting Miss Davis on the neck.... inmate Jackson's fly was fully open.... [Davis] sitting on his right leg.... I saw inmate Jackson place his right hand, palm up, between his leg and Miss Davis' buttocks....she derived great pleasure from this activity.... this conference was planned and/or requested solely as a

Indeed, their semi-public passionate embrace was highlighted in the prosecutor's opening statement, signaling how important he thought it was (although typically he got the date wrong): "On July 8, 1970" (1971 actually), "a meeting was arranged between the defendant and George Jackson at the Marin County Jail," and he declaimed they "used this meeting"—presumably to fortify Davis's defense—for "their only physical meeting that I know of, as an opportunity for a close passionate and physical involvement."¹⁴¹ Davis denounced the "small army of leering pigs" that ogled them as she "met with George for eight hours," as he was "chained and shackled."¹⁴²

Nevertheless, Prof. Davis chose to retain her words to him that were indicative of her state of mind.¹⁴³ And in the courtroom, the prosecution cited her words to him.¹⁴⁴ The problem for the prosecution was marrying that alleged *mens rea* to a wider criminal conspiracy involving concrete acts—beyond the purchase of weapons, which she could argue were for her protection given a cascade of threats. Moreover, why would an intelligent person buy a shotgun and sign autographs hours before its use in the seizing of a judge?

lovers' petting party.... I feel that all attorneys concerned had full knowledge...pitiful waste of taxpayers' money." Out of the time allotted, "less than ten percent" focused on "legal discussion." Cf. Dorothy Healey, Oral History: After praising Branton—"there is no question that Leo's handling of Angela's trial was...a major factor in the subsequent acquittal," she recalled that the "state had found a letter in his cell which Angela had written to him. Court permission had been granted for Angela and George to have a meeting inside the prison together, ostensibly to help exchange ideas on the legal questions...even though the guards were watching and even though the...lawyers were there, they had evidently engaged in some very intimate relations" followed by "the most passionate type of rhetoric" she penned to him afterwards. "I suggested that he let me have a copy of it and I would take it around to various writers I knew and see what could be done.... I took it to Dalton Trumbo and Trumbo did just a really brilliant job. What he did was to juxtapose the Song of Solomon"—a poetic Biblical story about, inter alia, love. "As a result, the language of Angela's letter to George, which appeared to have this very vivid sexual connotation...when juxtaposed with the Song of Solomon really didn't sound too much different. So then when he went back to court, he was able to get a great deal of it stricken on the ground that it was irrelevant and for the part that wasn't, he used Dalton's juxtaposition...to show that it was simply of the same character. What could be considered ignoble about the love of one person for another." See also Schreiber, *Cold War Exiles*, 176: After an exile in 1950s Mexico, Trumbo bought a "big house in Highland Park," Los Angeles, and "their children were teased at school about their father's political affiliations and neighbors would taunt the family by throwing garbage into their pool and yard," as "hate mail" accumulated. Undaunted, the mustachioed screenwriter sold "to eminent Black painter Charles White "a lot on his property on which White built a house."

141. Transcript, 27 March 1972, Reel 8, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

142. Davis to Aptheker, 14 July 1971, Box 50, Bettina Aptheker Papers: She rejected the "statement" that "I may have been the victim of 'Black Jujitsu' (blackmail by 'Street Militants') in terms of her relations with Magee, Jackson, the Panthers, et al.

143. Davis to Jackson, ca. 1970-1971, Box 46, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard: After discussing her reluctance to become a Girl Scout she says: "I'm totally under your power...wild uncontrollable rage...I could not love you without being committed to destroying your enemies.... if with my death, I could buy your freedom, it would be a happy beautiful way to go."

144. Transcript, 11 May 1972, Reel 12, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS: "feel all fluttery and kind of weak...my life-long husband...I am crazy with love and desire."

"How can the love of Angela Davis for George Jackson and for her people," argued Attorney Moore, "be...evidence of a crime?" Further, he argued, these letters seized from her apartment were not intended to be mailed but was more akin to a "personal diary or a personal memoir of feelings, thoughts, affection and political attitude."¹⁴⁵

This was part of a battle royal by the defense team to keep this "evidence" from being admitted as part of the prosecutor's case. Meeting in the judge's chambers, Branton was white-hot with fury about the possibility that her words would be admitted. "This is evil," he bellowed, "and I can't do it." Dramatically, he stormed out. Moore then termed what was at play as a "literary lobotomy," the "rape of a person's thought." The prosecutor hammered home her words, terming herself to Jackson as "your life long wife" who sends "infinite love." Then Branton returned and questioned how can words written in July 1971 be admitted to reflect on his client's state of mind in August 1970 or before? Moore then broached "*Ulysses* by James Joyce" and then Proust (he omitted Kafka). Again, this was a kind of pyrrhic victory for the prosecution, for it only fed the limping narrative that she was just a woman in love, driven by emotions, allowing Davis's team to counterpunch with anti-sexist blows, much more in tune with the zeitgeist.¹⁴⁶

Roughly a year after his younger brother was slain, Jackson was killed in prison—murdered, according to progressive reporter Karen Wald and others. Presiding at his funeral were Panther comrades Newton, Seale, Hewitt, Elaine Brown.¹⁴⁷ Wielding weapons, Panthers stood to attention.¹⁴⁸ The music of Nina Simone played as comrades handled shotguns defiantly.¹⁴⁹

There are many issues to be sorted concerning the death of Jackson,¹⁵⁰ yet it is undeniable that the official story is implausible at best. Purportedly, on an

145. Transcript, 1 November 1971, Reel 4, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS.

146. Transcript, 27 April 1972, Reel 11, Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS. Branton found it "very revealing" that an August 1971 letter "changed our [prosecution's] whole theory of the case," that they kept his client jailed and "had no case against her and did not discover the evidence which was going to make his case against her until August of 1971," when Jackson was slain and his cell was ransacked. Transcript, 25 April 1972, Reel 11.

147. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 3 September 1971.

148. *The Black Panther*, 4 September 1971. See also letters from Jackson in the 11 September 1971 edition.

149. *The Black Panther*, 10 December 1977.

150. See e.g., *People v. Johnny Spain*, 12 April 1976, Superior Court of California, Marin County. Reel 8, Black Panther Documents: Scandalous informant Louis Tackwood said he was involved in a conspiracy to kill Jackson, and that LAPD officers Don Beasley, Bob Sharett, Keel Ray Callahan and Dan Mahoney and their comrades were part of the plot. They picked him up in Santa Cruz about 1 August 1971 and drove to San Quentin to confer, then dropped him off in San Francisco. However, his testimony meandered and was confusing. He said the plan was to give Jackson the idea that he had a route to flee, that he would go to court, manage to flee—then they would kill him. Ed Burton of the FBI also was involved, he said. The plan was to provide Jackson with an inoperative weapon—but they gave him the opposite. Unfortunately, Hugo Pinell, a prisoner, interrogated him with confusing

August day in 1971, the attorney Stephen Bingham, scion of a Connecticut political dynasty, accompanied by legal worker, Vanita Witherspoon,¹⁵¹ arrived at San Quentin to confer with George Jackson. Somehow—despite tight security—

and compound questions. Yet what Tackwood said was not farfetched. He recounted a June 1970 meeting at the LAPD headquarters where he was asked to perform "illegal acts and it would pay well," as Jackson, ji Jaga, Newton, Seale and Cleaver all were to be killed. "When I say 'Soledad Brothers'... Jackson was the main concern... the only concern of the Panther Party, Cotton Smith and myself, was... getting Jackson." Thus, "everybody involved [focused] not so much on the Northern California Panthers but on the Southern California Panthers." "I know of personal knowledge," he said, that "they intercepted letters from Jackson to other people.... LAPD had given him a prospective date to break out.... houses had been bugged and even down to the cars.... they had set up a plot. The police had [done so] with the help of informers like me.... I had already bugged the phones... and gave a gun to a guard" meant for Jackson. But then he undermined his testimony by adding, "I'm getting a little confused... my mind is confused now." This auto thief had been working for the authorities for eight years preceding the pivotal 1970-1971 era. He resided at 1059 W. 58th St. in L.A. for two decades. He also was an informer for the FBI, in addition to the "Black Desk" of the LAPD which "dealt specifically with Black radical groups" that Robert Farwell headed. Although "infiltrating and disruption" of the BPP was his overall mission, he was "on loan" to Sacramento "to locate certain individuals in the north and to prevent them from testifying in the Angela Davis case.... one witness I was to locate, I was to kill when I found him." "Cotton" Smith was a comrade. "I bird-dogged Angela Davis for maybe three months in Santa Cruz.... I placed taps on their phones.... ransacked or burglarized some of their apartments and got letters and things from people that were in prison.... I generally became part of a group." After the "split" in the BPP, his job was "to assassinate" [Newton]. The "main hit squad was made up of active members of the Los Angeles chapter of the Panther party." Further undermining his credibility was denying authorship of his memoir, *The Glasshouse Tapes*. "That book there is [in] litigation" and his role was simply "taped commentary"... "I was shocked at some of the things in the book as anybody... I had no control over it." He added, "I was also a double agent... I had nothing to do with the white radical desk." He was also selling material from the LAPD to others. "Army Intelligence" was also involved in this nefariousness. On 22 August he received almost \$1000 for his role in the Jackson slaying. Also testifying was Paul Allen, at San Quentin in 1971; an officer showed him a weapon—presumably to Jackson—though this was a pistol that should not have been there, same Reel, 6 April 1976.

151. See Huey Newton, "War Without Terms: The Death of George Jackson," ca. 1971, Reel 60, Black Panther Documents: Witherspoon may have been, he says, an "agent herself." Consistent with the above, he limns the role of agent Tom Mosher and "Cotton" Smith who spoke in a "nervous, staccato speech pattern." See also Interview with Newton, ca. 1973, Reel 17: "George Jackson left his estate to the party, but we get only half of it... income from my books... few hundred thousand in the last few years." Cf. undated letter from Fay Stender to Newton, Reel 42: Jackson estate should be allocated to the BPP or a public interest firm specializing in prisoners' rights. Jackson, *Soledad Brother*, 300-301: "Dearest Angela," May 1970: "No one will profit from my immolation." See also Letter to Charles Garry, 28 June 1977, Reel 41, Black Panther Documents: "Vanetta [sic] Anderson and William Roberts were paid FBI informants... [she] received \$8000 for her part in the setup of George Jackson... got the gun from the BPP through another informant or agent, brought the gun into San Quentin in a brief case compartment and handed it to Steve Bingham who gave it to George Jackson." Of course, this story has been rejected by others. Cf. Deposition of Louis Elbert Tackwood, 22 April 1976, in *Various parties v. Bingham*, Superior Court of Marin County, Reel 10. Cf. Char Miller, ed., *Selected Writings of Hiram Bingham, 1814-1869: Missionary to the Hawaiian Islands*, Lewiston: Mellen, 1988. I happened to be present at the Pan African Film Festival in Los Angeles in February 2024 when Stephen Bingham addressed the audience after the showing of a documentary about his travails: He raised probing questions about the role of Witherspoon in August 1971.

they were able to smuggle a pistol into the room with Jackson who placed it in his "Afro," then engaged in a shootout with guards and was killed.¹⁵² Bingham—along with Witherspoon—met with him for about 50 minutes and upon hearing of the slaying he fled into exile before returning home in 1984.¹⁵³

Even before August 1971, Thorne had uncovered disturbingly disgusting stories about events at this hellscape of a prison,¹⁵⁴ giving credence to the notion that Jackson was assassinated.

Hence, Charles Garry rejected the official story. "In all likelihood," he said, "George Jackson was murdered. That is the opinion of the twenty-six other adjustment center inmates who signed a petition to that effect a few days later and

152. Jo Durden-Smith, *Who Killed George Jackson? Fantasies, Paranoia and the Revolution*, New York: Knopf, 1976. I knew Witherspoon, as we had common roots in Black St. Louis, and bumped into her occasionally in Berkeley. Her father, Robert L. Witherspoon, was an attorney who collaborated with William Patterson in the 1950s: Horne, *Communist Front?*, 103, 290. See also Terri Morrison to Bernard Geis, 25 May 1974, Box 1268, Random House Records. Prof. Davis expressed "surprise and then extreme anger" at an article in the *Village Voice* of 16 May 1974, wherein it was written that Jackson "killed the guard in Soledad," which ignited the mass defense that drew in Davis, and this was "all on tape" in a "confession to Greg Armstrong." Jackson also said that Davis "had nothing to do with it," speaking of 7 August. Armstrong was an editor who collaborated with Jackson on a book the latter published. Cf. Armstrong to David Lubell, 10 March 1972, Reel 41, Black Panther Documents. Jackson's comrade Johnny Spain denounced Armstrong's book on the deceased prisoner. Spain to "Comrade Huey," 15 July 1974, Reel 30, assailing Armstrong's "so called" book. See also Andrews, *Black Power*, 158: Spain's story was cinematic. Born as a "white" child in Mississippi, but as his skin color becomes ever darker as he leaves infancy, it becomes apparent that his father was Black, causing him to be evicted from his home and shipped to California. A complex chain of events leads him to prison, where he encounters George Jackson, who plied him with the writings of Che Guevara. He too was distraught when his comrade was slain in prison and was nonplussed when thereafter the Bank of America branch in San Francisco was bombed while "other bombings followed—in San Mateo...and Sacramento. Correctional offices across the state were targeted."

153. Durden-Smith, "The Last One Home," in Vertical File-George Jackson, Freedom Archives-Berkeley: The contention here is that Jackson headed a "Secret Army" in his role as Field Marshal of the BPP. At the same site and file see also article by Bingham, ca. 1996, wherein he criticized a book by Paul Liberatore on this episode, as it was said to be "full of factual inaccuracies." Bingham only met Prof. Davis in 1984. In the same file see also article by Luis Talamantez in the *People's Tribune*, 16 September 1991. See also in the Jackson Vertical File, Eric Mann, "Comrade George," 1972: Jackson's mother petitions the U.N. for investigation while a detachment of militants named after Jackson attacks a police precinct in San Francisco, and one staff sergeant killed. See also in BLA Vertical File: Message to the Black Movement, Political Statement from the Black Underground published by "Coordinating Committee" of Black Liberation Army, Chicago, n.d., on "Armed Struggle." In the same Vertical File, see Sekou Odinga, "New Afrikan Freedom Fighter." See also Jackson to "Dear Penny," 1 August 1969, Reel 37, Black Panther Documents: "I never read fiction unless it is a military type." See John Thorne to Warden L.S. Nelson, San Quentin, 29 March 1971. Box 46, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard: Bingham seeks to meet with Jackson. Lynne Urban to "George," unclear date, Box 46: After writing fervent letters to Jackson, she is sought after Bingham episode.

154. Thorne to Willie Brown, 11 May 1970, Box 101, Thorne Papers: Guards "constantly taunt" Black inmates: "We'll get you this time nigger" was a favorite phrasing. "Urine and feces have actually been placed" in their food.

it is the opinion of many others.”¹⁵⁵ With little effect, Jackson’s counsel, John Thorne, demanded that Sacramento investigate the murkiness. He wondered how Jackson was able to evade a “skin search,” common for those like him. Even visits to the prison by Dr. Carleton Goodlett, the erstwhile left-leaning NAACP leader from San Francisco, by Willie Brown of the state legislature, Henry Ramsey, attorney, and others, were allowed, but their survey of the prison for their own investigation yielded meager results ultimately.¹⁵⁶ Thorne found “many discrepancies in the stories” about his client’s death, whom he characterized as “one of the most brilliant and loving men I ever met.” He was an “absolute physical specimen” and an “expert at karate.” But more than this, “George was not a fool...to run out into that enclosed yard where you are surrounded by twenty foot high walls topped by barbed wire and armed guards with guns, had to be a foolish act”—but that was the official story. “Perhaps there is a great deal that we will never know,”¹⁵⁷ said the man who knew more than most about what happened on 21 August. Still, after the slaying, Robert Butler, then an inmate at Folsom, filed an affidavit that said that he was approached to kill Jackson.¹⁵⁸ In other words, prison authorities would look favorably on freeing Butler if he were to commit murder.¹⁵⁹ Even a former San Quentin guard questioned the official story.¹⁶⁰

* * *

155. Garry and Goldberg, *Streetfighter*, 243.

156. John Thorne to Lieut. Gov. Reinecke and Speaker Moretti, 7 October 1971, Box 101, Thorne Papers.

157. Thorne to Lars Hellstrom, 16 January 1973, Box 101, Thorne Papers; Hellstrom translated Jackson’s work into Swedish. For more on contradictions in the official story, see also “Free Angela Newsletter,” 1 September 1971, Box 97. Cf. Andrews, *Black Power*, 188: According to the coroner, Jackson was the “‘most perfect example of a mesomorph’ he’d ever seen.”

158. Thorne to Patti Roberts, 16 November 1971, Box 97, Thorne Papers.

159. Patti Roberts to Thorne, 4 October 1971, Box 97, Thorne Papers.

160. Transcript of KDIA radio interview, 2 September 1971, Box 97, Thorne Papers. *The Black Panther*, 10 February 1973: “Another year of prison...parole release denied” Wells, and the 23 December 1972 edition: “45 years in prison...the story of [Wells].” Cf. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 26 April 1973: Branton says inmates said if they killed Wesley Robert Wells, the prisoner defended by Panthers and Communists alike—akin to Jackson, they “would be given freedom.” Many opted to try leaving this long-time prisoner “scarred...all over his face and head.” He had spent eight years on death row, “longer than any other prisoner in California history with the exception of Caryl Chessman. Prior to his murder George Jackson had stated that Wells was one of the best inmate teachers to come forth in the last decade.” *The Black Panther*, 6 July 1974: Wells freed after 47 years in prison. *The Black Panther*, 27 July 1974: “Welcome home Bob Wells” after 47 years in prison; he arrived in L.A. in 1917 when he was 10. In edition of 3 August 1974, Wells says, “I feel proud to be able to identify myself as part of this great organization,” i.e., the BPP. *The Black Panther*, 24 January 1976: “Sudden death” of Wells. On Patterson, the CP and Wells, see Horne, *Communist Front?*, especially 306-315.

On 5 June 1972, Davis was acquitted.¹⁶¹ For the previous 22 months, there had been established a small office on Broadway in L.A. devoted to her defense. When the verdict was announced on television, a "single, incomprehensible shriek pierced the air," according to an observant reporter, as supporters "burst into tears...hugged each other and screamed."¹⁶²

Days later, security was tight as more than 1000 people crowded the Embassy Auditorium to hear what was portrayed as her "first major speech" since the acquittal. The Black reporter noticed "more whites than Blacks" in the "long line" awaiting a "thorough search" as "bodyguards" with "walkie talkies" surveyed the scene. The LAPD was there too, and arrested one of the bodyguards, a subtle message that some things had not changed.¹⁶³ But their typicality could not squelch the joy in victory, arriving after numerous setbacks. The sign behind her during her speech read "Los Angela,"¹⁶⁴ redolent in more ways than one. By November 1972 the enthusiastically applauding crowd hearing her had ballooned to 2800 at the Cal State-Fullerton campus.¹⁶⁵ However, it was not all smooth sailing for this philosopher: The UC Regents voted not to rehire her, over the objections of her former departmental colleagues.¹⁶⁶

And there was a wider consequence, according to Dorothy Healey, that was profoundly impactful: "Because of Angela many young Black people joined the Communist Party—elsewhere, not in this city," meaning L.A., "but in other cities." And "the other part was to make her an international symbol." As for Prof. Davis, "she, who had been so critical of party policy...was convinced that, number one, she owed her life to Franklin [Alexander] and Charlene [Mitchell] and Kendra [Alexander]...secondly, she owed her life to the party. Thirdly she owed her life to the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries" and, said Healey, "as she herself admitted to me a year later when I saw her when she came back from her trip to the socialist countries...she was adopting positions that she wasn't really terribly comfortable with, simply out of gratitude"—though Healey does not relate with more specificity what this meant. And Healey cited Davis's special affection for Cuba.¹⁶⁷

161. Tigar, *Sensing Injustice*, 282.

162. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 8 June 1972.

163. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 15 June 1972. Cf. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 16 June 1972. There is an estimated crowd of 1500 following, according to the 17 March 1972 edition, 6000 rallying for her freedom earlier. See the article by the late writer and poet Wanda Coleman on the latter in the 10 March 1972 edition.

164. *People's World*, 17 June 1972.

165. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 24 November 1972.

166. Report, 23 September 1972, Reel 14, Black Panther Documents.

167. Dorothy Healey, Oral History. Cf. *People's World*, 13 April 1974, Davis on Mitchell: "I owe my life to Comrade Charlene...risking her own life to save mine."

As for Healey, she resigned from the party a year after the acquittal, announced on KPFK-FM, the Pacifica Radio outlet in L.A.,¹⁶⁸ the culmination of years of fractiousness.

Cuba was precisely the socialist country that survived the post-1989 convulsions. Also surviving was the popularity of Professor Davis, signaled in the immediate aftermath of the acquittal when she received a huge bouquet of congratulatory flowers from the British band, the Rolling Stones.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ *People's World*, 14 July 1973. Her fellow Smith Act defendant, Al Richmond, also resigned from the CP: *People's World*, 1 September 1973. See also *Los Angeles Free Press*, 13 July 1973: Transcript of her resignation printed here, wherein she objected to the CP view on Prague 1968 and their critique of Richmond and comrade Peggy Dennis, spouse of the late leader Eugene Dennis. Her Southland comrades denied that there was a move to "expel" her. See also edition of 20 July 1973: 400 at Unitarian Church in L.A. to hear Healey. See also Peggy Dennis's critique of Maurice Isserman article in *Socialist Review*, February 1982, Box 112, CPUSA Records-NYU.

¹⁶⁹ *People's World*, 10 June 1972.

Chapter 18

Skyjacking, 1971-1980

The Davis acquittal seemed to inaugurate a rosy dawn for Black radicalism, especially in the City of Angels, where she had bloomed. The mass support she received from African Americans and from the international community was a combination that, potentially, could overcome the formidable right-wing forces that were ascending in the Republican Party and influencing the entire political spectrum. The vitality of liberation movements in Africa, the strength of the forces surrounding Michael Manley in Jamaica and Walter Rodney in Guyana, along with their own collaboration with socialist Cuba augured well. However, by 1991, what in many ways was the fulcrum of this entire complex—the Soviet Union—was imploding, followed by the exit of Professor Davis and many of her comrades from the CP. And even before then, the BPP had disappeared into history. Surviving were Black liberals, many of whom did not seem to recognize that the strength of those to their left was an insurance policy for themselves, helping to keep the ultra-right at bay. Also surviving was Karenga,¹ whose Kwanzaa holiday, an analogue to Christmas and Hanukah, meant that increasingly he would be viewed as a kind of wise old man of Black Liberation. But he also represented an ideological trend that came to the fore when, for example, the activist academic Nathan Hare resigned from the highly regarded journal *Black Scholar*, because of an alleged “Marxist takeover.”² (Hare may have influenced the BPP when he rebuked *Black Scholar* founder Robert Chrisman, after he praised a group within the CP’s orbit for mobilizing several thousand to demonstrate as Secretary of State Henry Kissinger spoke in San Francisco.³) It was also this former Howard and San Francisco State professor who opined that the Panthers “allowed themselves to come under the influence of white elements” and thus “gave too much credence to a strict Marxist analysis.”⁴ When Karenga materialized at an NAACP confab

1. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 2 August 1973: Karenga conviction sustained by Second District Court on appeal.

2. *The Black Panther*, 8 March 1975.

3. *The Black Panther*, 17 April 1976: The group was the National Anti-Imperialist Movement in Solidarity with African Liberation.

4. Walt Thompson, “What’s Left of the Black Left,” Reel 14, Black Panther Documents.

in San Diego in 1976, it symbolized not only the melding of Black Nationalists and liberals, it also marked the ideological reach of the former.⁵

* * *

The Davis acquittal in 1972 could have marked a new birth of freedom for the BPP—including the so-called Newton and Cleaver factions both. Instead, Kathleen Cleaver seemed almost regretful, certainly acerbic, about the impending acquittal. Jonathan Jackson, she said, was “quietly overlooked, thanks to the CP’s propaganda machines that broadcast the angelic Angela—scholar, Communist Party member.” And predictably, she thought, the international community, including “Cuba, Algeria, Soviet Union—racist states” all, in her opinion, “white governments” with “colored populations,”⁶ swallowed this whole. While in a death match with Newton—or “Huey-ites” as they were termed in L.A.—and fending off U.S. imperialism, the Cleavers were now turning on ostensible allies, leaving few alternatives beyond cutting a deal with Washington and returning home as humble Christians, which is precisely what happened. As the saying goes, the Cleavers didn’t seem to realize who was buttering their bread. Days later she was in Switzerland on a speaking tour which happened to be—she said—“organized by the supporters of Angela Davis.”⁷

The charms of Switzerland were a respite from the drudgery and intrigues of Algiers.⁸ A few months after the acquittal, the distaff Cleaver was complaining that “we were under house arrest [in] our headquarters here for about two days.” What had occurred was that a hijacker from the U.S. had landed with a small fortune, and the comrades made “demands that they [the government] return to us the million dollars.” Instead, the authorities “searched the pad, yanked the phone out the wall, took some guns, cut off our telex number & surrounded & occupied the house with policemen.”⁹ She was outraged since Algiers was “so anxious to

⁵ Minutes of San Diego branch meeting, 29 September 1976, Part VI, Box C77, NAACP Papers-LC: The meeting occurred at 6005 Hughes Street; absent was longtime activist Harold Brown. Largely forgotten as Karenga was rehabilitated was the criminal conviction that landed him in prison. Of late, one of the women victimized in this crime has addressed this matter. See Jones, *What We Stood For*, 66, 71, 87: She addressed in detail his “drug fueled paranoia” that led to a “Jim Jones type of thing,” a reference to a murderous cult leader who attained prominence in San Francisco before orchestrating a kind of mass suicide in Guyana. After his comrades “tied our wrists with rope” they then “hung us...from the ceiling” and threatened to “kill her.” Another woman was kept in a “tiger cage.”

⁶ Kathleen Cleaver to Robert [surname unclear], 12 May 1972, Box 1, Cleaver-TAMU.

⁷ Kathleen Cleaver to Hans and Ira Goldwater at 392 Central Park West, Manhattan, 16 May 1972, Box 1, Cleaver-TAMU.

⁸ *New York Times*, 17 March 1978: CIA had African-American agents monitoring BPP legation in Algiers.

⁹ Kathleen Cleaver to Myriel, 1 August 1972, Box 1, Cleaver-TAMU.

please the Americans" and she expected more harassment from their now difficult hosts: "they just blocked the street with their cars, pulled guns on us and told us to get out! What beautiful revolutionary comrades!" was her sarcastic rejoinder, which amounted to yet another step on the winding road to reconciliation with U.S. imperialism.¹⁰ At the same time, she was still feuding with Newton and his "opportunistic and reformist politics," who "refused" a request from a comrade from the "Red Youth" of The Hague to provide diplomatic aid in China.¹¹

She found herself among other "marooned Afro-Americans" in Algiers. Even a "welcome door to come to" Switzerland was hardly compensation since Geneva was a "dismal city." She was "more and more overwhelmed by the sobering realization of the immense power in opposition to us."¹²

By November 1972 she found herself wallowing in the "pits of despair," which even the arrival of an "old acquaintance Shirley Campbell" in town did little to assuage. Even getting a glimpse of the great African revolutionary Amílcar Cabral of Guinea-Bissau when he passed through Algiers was insufficient to lift her flagging spirits. "Revisionism, racism and reaction is abounding everywhere," she groused. Although any credible armed struggle, which the Cleavers were said to favor, would depend upon a rear base in Cuba, she was hardly pleased with what she perceived in Havana. For the "racism" there, she insisted, "is historically and contemporaneously the biggest block to their revolutionary movement." Culprits here were the "sabotage of the American CPers," which was "well documented" in concert with the "bullshittiness [*sic*] of the Cuban Communist Party." The "revolutionary struggle in the U.S." was "demoralizing" in any case, as evidenced by her "last visit" to California where she was "set up by a 'brother' and just missed a shoot-out with the police." As for "Huey," et al., they call themselves "scientific socialists and line up behind all the revisionists they can find from Chou en-lai" of China to "Marien Ngoubai" of Congo-Brazzaville, no longer comrades. She was still miffed with "young Angela [who] embarrassed everybody here," she chided, "with her trip to the Soviet Union," in that instead

10. Kathleen Cleaver to Myriel, 1 August 1972, Box 1, Cleaver-TAMU. See *Los Angeles Free Press*, 29 September 1972: In July the "biggest hijack ransom ever paid" was consummated in Algiers, which led to a "series of escalating conflicts between the [local] police and the Panthers." Simultaneously, there was a "\$1 billion proposed plan to import natural gas from Algeria to the U.S.," causing Eldridge Cleaver to launch a "veiled slap" at his hosts. This led to the raid on his villa by authorities "brandishing machine guns...ripped the phone from the wall and took parts from the Telex machine," leaving the guests under "house arrest." See *Right On!*, August 1972, [Journal of New York Panthers], Reel 26, Black Panther Documents: "In Defense of Aircraft Expropriations...Panther office raided in Algeria." Alleged Black Liberation Army cadre skyjacks plane to Algeria, 31 July 1972, including George Wright plus Jean and Melvin McNair. Natural gas deals between Algeria and the U.S. were seen as critical in foiling this initiative. Same reel, *Right On!* November-December 1972: Algiers office raided August 1972 which is tied to the 3 June hijacking involving William Holder and Kerchow, delivering \$500,000. See also *Right On!* 15 January 1973.

11. Kathleen Cleaver to A. Van Wijk, 14 September 1972, Box 1, Cleaver-TAMU.

12. Kathleen Cleaver to Myriel, 28 January 1972, Box 1, Cleaver-TAMU.

of denouncing the purported revisionists, she thanked those who helped to rescue her from the dungeon of death. Cleaver instead was fuming about the "dodos in the American Communist Party."¹³

The BPP rejected the "idea" as "absurd" that they would "assassinate Kathleen [Cleaver]" although there were ideological differences since they demanded launching of "guerrilla warfare" and "building a Black army" while the "Algiers group denounced our party as revisionist." They were "astonished to find out that Ruchell Magee rejects the support of the [BPP] and instead authorized Kathleen Cleaver to organize and direct [his] Defense Committee."¹⁴

While Davis was traversing the globe in an elongated victory lap, Magee, by December 1972, was on trial in San Francisco in what was portrayed as the nation's "first police state courtroom," festooned with a façade of bulletproof glass which was seen as "technologically terrifying." Magee insisted muscicularly that he had a right to rebel. He had spent years in prison and here he detailed how the purpose of 7 August was to get to a radio station to broadcast complaints to a wider audience. He compared himself and his now deceased comrades to slave rebels of the past. However, the successful enslaved Africans in the U.S.—like those on the slave ship *Creole* headed from the mid-Atlantic states to the slave mart of New Orleans who rebelled and sailed into the British Bahamas, where they were freed¹⁵—often had external support. By allying himself with the sectarian Cleavers, Magee had cut himself off from this power source. There were seven weeks of jury selection alone, and former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark initially was barred from the defense team, despite the fact that his addition would not have cost the state a penny. Yet tax dollars were spent in profusion as Magee was not driven to the courthouse but delivered by helicopter. And when he testified, his unusualness as an accused was transmitted prejudicially to jurors when he spoke from the defense table, not the witness stand. However, he

13. Kathleen Cleaver to Dear Carlos and Shona, 27 November 1972, Box 1, Cleaver-TAMU. Cf. in same place, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 10 September 1972: Ms. Cleaver "escapes plot": Her bodyguards were L.A.'s John Washington and Roland Freeman, who headed north to the fortress of the Newton group and served to foil an attempted ambush in San Francisco. See also *Jet*, 2 December 1971, Reel 2, Black Panther Documents: Ms. Cleaver is on the cover of this popular weekly with the inscription, "The Return of a Black Liberator." Nearby on this reel is a picture of her and the attorney Johnnie Cochran, as she serves as a "key witness in Los Angeles murder trial [of] Elmer Pratt" on whose behalf she testifies. See also *The Black Panther*, 15 April 1972: Both Panther factions agreed on hostility to Moscow: "Has China Betrayed the Revolution?" No, they are fighting the "Soviet Renegade Clique...naturally, Angela's party. The Soviet-oriented Communist Party [USA]...backs Soviet Revisionism to the hilt and trumpets the Soviet-style anti-China rhetoric.... Soviets have never supported the Palestinian people." *The Black Panther*, 3 June 1972: "The enemy is uniting...Nixon and Russians...social imperialists...sign war pact." *The Black Panther*, 29 July 1972: Future right-winger and fierce critic of BPP, David Horowitz accuses the Soviets and China of "undermining Vietnamese struggle."

14. *The Black Panther*, 30 September 1972.

15. See *Los Angeles Free Press*, 8 December 1972. See also Home, *Negro Comrades*.

acquitted himself well, according to the reporter present, speaking for three and a half hours in a soft-spoken though intense peroration that left the jury "hypnotized." He denied knowing in advance of the 7 August plot. The "Rambo" prosecutor on that fateful day, Gary Thomas, testified that it was Magee who killed Judge Haley. After 56 hours of deliberation over nine days, there was a mistrial, a hung jury after 17 ballots. Prof. Davis appeared while the jury was deliberating, which may have spurred this result. No matter. Magee went on to spend the bulk of his life imprisoned until expiring in the 21st century.¹⁶

* * *

The BPP also reminded that Eldridge Cleaver "negatively criticized Cuba, he criticized China, he criticized the Congo-Brazzaville, he criticized Algeria."¹⁷

However, Newton and his allies were notably incensed by the criticism of China.¹⁸ This was especially the case after David Du Bois, the son of W.E.B. Du Bois's second spouse, Shirley Graham Du Bois,¹⁹ became not only "Editor-in-Chief" of the party organ in about 1974 but also "spokesman" for the party. They touted the fact that he had visited China in 1950, 1959 and 1974—the first, tenth

16. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 23 March 1973, 6 April 1973, and 13 April 1973. See also *The Black Panther*, 5 February 1971: Magee "speaks out" in full-page display. Replicated in the 20 February 1971 edition. See his obituary, *San Francisco Bay View*, 14 December 2023.

17. *The Black Panther*, 23 November 1972. Brazzaville had to be wary of Black Americans in light of so many of them arriving across the river from the larger Congo, dominated by U.S. imperialism. See e.g., Noble M. Melancamp, staff assistant to President Nixon to Mrs. Myrtle Ollison, National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, 25 September 1969, Box 22, WHCF, Subject Files, Co. Presidential Materials Project, RNPL: "Pleasure at the success of the recent visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo by the group from your Association." Many African-Americans—Nationalists, Liberals and Leftists—tended to be critical of the socialist camp, unlike many in Africa itself, which was not helpful to Pan-African solidarity. See JoNina Abron to Newton and Huggins, 12 February 1979, Reel 45, Black Panther Documents: Working with Zimbabweans and Third World Fund led by Ida Strickland and Belvie Rooks. "We worked very closely with them during 1975-76 when the struggle in Angola was very intense" and when many Black Americans—for various reasons—would up on the same side as apartheid South Africa and U.S. imperialism. "Neither has seemed to work with us since Elaine left. She was friends with both Ida and Belvie."

18. *The Black Panther*, 18 September 1976: Full-page portrait of Mao, as he expires. Du Bois in China to Newton, 19 February 1979, Reel 45, Black Panther Documents: After reflecting on "continuing efforts to destroy you and the party...telephoning here from here to California is a terrible hassle and totally unreliable. I must book the call and pay the full cost, estimating the length. Then, the call never comes at the time it is booked."

19. Contract between Du Bois and BPP, January 1973, Reel 9, Black Panther Documents: He was to receive a munificent—for the times—\$100 weekly.

and 25th anniversaries of the Revolution.²⁰ He had studied in what was then called Peking University between September 1959 and June 1960.²¹ By February 1975 he had written and published the fifth of a series on China in the party paper²² and by the spring the tenth of the series was published.²³ His mother, Shirley Graham Du Bois, who was to die in China, sought to arrange a month-long tour for Newton.²⁴ Assuredly, Du Bois's arrival on the scene only enhanced the party's ongoing fascination with Maoism.²⁵

Du Bois was a prominent organizer of an important conference in L.A.—“Conspiracy in America, From Dallas to Watergate”—just after his series on China concluded. He was joined by Jane Fonda, Tom Hayden, Charles Garry, and

200. *The Black Panther*, 28 December 1974; in the 18 January 1975 edition, see picture of him in China. *The Black Panther*, 28 September 1974: the 25th anniversary of the Revolution in China hailed.

211. *The Black Panther*, 8 March 1975.

222. *The Black Panther*, 8 February 1975, and 22 February 1975.

233. *The Black Panther*, 28 April 1975.

244. David Du Bois to Newton, 24 June 1974, Reel 22, Black Panther Documents. Cf. John J. Simon off Random House to Martin Kenner, 26 April 1972, Reel 11: No interest in book on BPP in China.

255. See “Inner-Party Memorandum,” 17 September 1972, Reel 14, Black Panther Documents: A heavy dosage of Maoism is imbedded in “Political Education” for cadre. On the same reel, see Inner-Party Memorandum, 1 August 1973: “50% of all regular Thursday morning classes will be devoted to Chairman Mao Tse-tung’s ‘Red Book.’” Perhaps conversely, it was commanded that “All party members are to attend church every Sunday. There are no exceptions,” Inner-Party Memorandum, 8 August 1973. Reel 14. Cf. *The Black Panther*, 17 July 1976, Newton: “Christianity was imposed upon [Negroes]” and “increased their sense of hopelessness,” though “early Christians succeeded in undermining the authority and confidence of their rulers and rising up out of slavery, the Afro-American experience has been just the opposite.” See the 24 July 1976 edition, Newton: The “Bible is too full of contradictions and irrationality.” See also *The Black Panther*, 25 February 1978: Excerpt from pamphlet on informants and agents from Scientologists. See also Document from Universal Life Church, 11 June 1973, Reel 1, Black Panther Documents: “Credentials” to Newton ratifying that he is now a “Minister.” *The Black Panther*, 14 May 1977: Newton reads Bible for third time, “which I love.” Cf. Former Panther leader in San Francisco, George Murray “sought leniency today on grounds he has turned to religion,” 10 July 1969, Archives of SFSU Alumni. See also Document 22 February 1969: His “suspension helped trigger a student strike” that was a mighty blow in favor of the establishment of Black Studies as an academic discipline. Remarkably, a number of BPP cadre turned toward Christianity, becoming pastors in certain instances, after the party’s demise: See Thomas Horne, Oral History. This was not only true for Horne of San Diego but also his comrade: Wilbert Hauser, Oral History. He became a Christian by the 1980s and hoped to become a pastor. At the same time, see also “Black Panther Party Background Questionnaire” for Thomas Horne: “I am an Ordained Minister Chaplain. I received my ordination on August 18, 2010.... Since June...1980 my field of interest has been to win souls to the Kingdom of God...the only way...is through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.... I became a member of...Abundant Living Family Church...because of its active Prison Ministry...we make 50 sack lunches...and feed the homeless, and share the word of God.”

attorney and writer Mark Lane.²⁶ It was Du Bois who rose to the defense of then Lieut. Gov. Mervyn Dymally after he was attacked by the *Los Angeles Times*.²⁷

Having painted the Soviets, the Chinese, the Cubans, the Algerians, the "Huey-ites,"²⁸ the CP and others as sellouts, revisionists and other intended insults, the Cleavers and those that followed them had painted themselves into a corner. By March 1973 the report emerged that the dynamic couple and their brood had "vanished from Algeria...no one answers the bell."²⁹

Inflammatory rhetoric aside, Kathleen Cleaver had a point insofar as Washington decided to improve ties to Algiers—perhaps in order to wrongfoot the Panthers there?—and this led to superfluity for the legation. By April 1974 the Algerian leadership was conferring with their counterparts in the White House.³⁰ An effusive President Nixon gave enthusiastic thanks to "His Excellency Houari [Boumedienne] President" of Algeria "for the magnificent gifts you brought Mrs. Nixon and me."³¹ The ultimate "gift" would be downsizing the Panther legation in his capital, facilitated by the comrades' own missteps.

Unfortunately, for the long-term health of the Black Left, there was not only sniping between the Cleaver "faction" and its Newton counterpart, but the Communists felt compelled to rush to the defense of Prof. Davis, who with her acquittal was evolving into a prominent political and fundraising presence.

26. *The Black Panther*, 19 May 1975. Black students at UCSB "occupy computer center" and issue demands re: Black Studies. See also Report, 7 May 1975, Box 1, Uarch, Isla Vista Riots Collection: UCSB: Computer center seized.

27. *The Black Panther*, 21 July 1975. I knew David and, in fact, stayed in his commodious Cairo flat which facilitated my biography of his mother. However, China aside, his political and ideological influence on the party was not always helpful. See Du Bois to Newton, 25 June 1973, Reel 10, Black Panther Documents: Julian Mayfield "long time friend and now advisor" to Guyanese leader Forbes Burnham wants the Oaklander to come to this South American nation "all expenses paid" in that the "struggle...between Blacks and Indians" was heating up. "Blacks have it now; Indians are trying to get it back.... Mayfield tells me Guyana is the only country in this hemisphere in which a Black American can be sure of obtaining political sanctuary, 'no questions asked.'" Actually, the situation was more complex than this: See Gerald Horne, *Cold War in a Hot Zone: The United States Confronts Labor and Independence Struggles in the British West Indies*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007. Newton to Aubrey Armstrong, 15 February 1977, Reel 45, Black Panther Documents: "Government position is that my presence in Guyana might complicate their relations with the United States." Cf. *The Black Panther*, 24 February 1980, Du Bois: "the white left has abandoned the Black left."

28. *Los Angeles Times*, 6 August 1972: Kathleen Cleaver, "The Party is dead."

29. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 29 March 1973. Cf. Agreement between Cleaver and Cinema V Ltd., 17 August 1970, Reel 10, Black Panther Documents: Concerning film on the Cleavers in Algiers.

30. Jeanne W. Davis, staff secretary to G.S. Springsteen, Box 9, White House Central Files, Subject Files, Presidential Materials Project, RNPL.

31. President Nixon to "His Excellency...President of the Council of the Revolution and President of the Council of Ministers," 26 April 1974, Box 9, White House Central Files, Subject Files, Presidential Materials Project, RNPL.

Newton was excoriated.³² Communist journalist Mark Allen—also known as Gregory Johnson, who studied at Pasadena City College before fleeing the draft and residing in Canada³³—went after the leader, variously described as the “Servant,” hammer and tong. This was in the wake of yet another assault on Prof. Davis—antipathy to her seemed to be the point of unity between BPP factions. Derisively, Newton termed her a “fool of some sort,” and Allen unloaded on him, terming him a “Modern Invisible Man” unable to get his “mind and his mouth” in sync. He greeted a recent interview with him with both “laughter” and “disappointment.”³⁴ Much of this back and forth was in response to a Panther critique of Davis. “Come Home Angela” was their cry, as they charged that since her acquittal she had not paid necessary tribute to Black Americans in the forefront of her rescue, all “under the dictates of the racist and reactionary Communist Party.”³⁵ Bobby Seale referred to her in what was termed an “obvious reference” when he questioned those who “say they are gonna fight for all political prisoners and then don’t when they get out of jail.”³⁶

Her defense replied that her “first interview” after being granted bail was to the BPP organ itself and two days later she appeared on KDIA, a popular Bay Area radio station targeting Black listeners.³⁷ The CP, sniffed Newton, was “very conservative.”³⁸

Still, it was left to Charlene Mitchell to bring out the heavy artillery in light of Newton’s and Cleaver’s attack on Davis.³⁹ Lost in the whirlwind of

32. *People’s World*, 8 July 1972: Lampooned was Newton’s “revolutionary leap from lumpen to Black Capitalism” as he addressed Negro manufacturers. He was said to have used words that they damne “I’m not a Marxist...we don’t have to copy Marx, Engels, Hegel and certainly not the Soviet Union because I don’t like them.”

33. *People’s World*, 2 June 1970.

34. *People’s World*, 28 April 1973.

35. *The Black Panther*, 2 September 1972: “Why has Angela Davis refused to involve herself with the programs of Black organizations and people?” She “was told...not to work with Ericka.”

36. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 15 September 1972.

37. Response to 2 September 1972 critique, Series 2, Box 41, Newton Foundation. See also Martin Kenner to L.C. Pogradin of *Ms. Magazine*, 30 March 1972, Reel 12, Black Panther Documents: Davis gave Elaine Brown an “exclusive interview...immediately after her release” on bail: is this publication “interested”? Cf. Charles Garry to KDIA, 2 April 1972, Reel 12: He wanted “spot radio time” and would pay, but station still balks.

38. Interview with Newton, 30 September 1972, Reel 15, Black Panther Documents.

39. *People’s World*, 23 September 1972: “Since its inception, the BPP has suffered through many twists and turns of varying militance and passivity, courage and an absence of struggle, rhetorical absurdity and a search for ideology...every possible direction—left, right, forward and backward and in circles.... found a home in Black Capitalism, where it has retired comfortably, waiting for an inevitable death to overtake it.... it has always rejected the working class as a vehicle for revolution; it has never been class conscious.... for months after San Rafael, readers of the BPP paper would read of support for Jonathan Jackson and Ruchell Magee but not for Angela”—an overstatement. There was a “hustler mentality” in their ideology, an extension of the sanctification of the lumpen. The BPP “has sought to become the Salvation Army for the community, giving away free breakfasts, free medical care, free this, free that to a handful of people.... does not seek to organize Black people to

imprecations was a point that should have been recognized at least implicitly: COINTELPRO long had created fake letters to cast Newton as the "finger man" in the arrest of Davis in October 1970, and this crude campaign had hardly lost velocity.⁴⁰ Both of these parties would have benefited from a ceasefire that was not in the offing.⁴¹ A truce would have been of maximum benefit to the BPP, whose past invocation of armed struggle had brought a stiffer reciprocity from the authorities,⁴² and the party ill-positioned to counterpunch with enhanced global solidarity. (To their credit, however, when the National Caucus of Labor Committees began physically assaulting CP members, the BPP objected vociferously.⁴³)

demand from the state what is rightfully theirs" and now it "writhes in its death throes." See also Karen Wald to Charles Garry, 16 December 1977, Reel 41, Black Panther Documents: She alleges that George Jackson was considering leaving the BPP before his murder and was "considering making his criticisms public." Cf. on same reel, Charles Garry to Wald, 15 December 1977: He denies adamantly her allegation. Cf. *The Black Panther*, 28 August 1971: Jackson "cannot be replaced," he was a "genius" who "set the standard for all political prisoners"; this was accompanied by a statement from Davis. Cf. Martin Kenner to "Gwen," 13 April 1972, Reel 12, Black Panther Documents: Britain wants Newton to visit during "Angela Davis Month." *The Black Panther*, 25 March 1972: Full-page ad on BPP sponsored "Angela Davis People's Free Food Program... 10,000 free bags of groceries... chickens in every bag" in Oakland and Berkeley. *The Black Panther*, 1 April 1972: "Angela goes to trial with non-peer jury." *The Black Panther*, 15 July 1972: "Criticism for Angela Davis from Third World Media News." BPP "neither a pro nor con."

40. FBI Counter Intelligence against Newton, ca. 1970, Reel 42, Black Panther Documents.

41. See e.g., Patricia Stennis of Young Workers Liberation League of Philadelphia, CP youth arm, to Newton, August 1971: "I for one did not like the article at all," that he wrote on Jackson's slaying. She said he put too much stress on his attempted escape as opposed to his being set up. She emphasized that the masses were "not ready for arm[ed] struggle yet. Remember arm[ed] struggle is a tactic not a principle." She dubbed the *Oaklander* "absurd... shows how narrow minded you are... really belittles your organization," adding in passing, "this is my personal opinion" did not diminish the sting, nor assuage those who would see it as a CP assaultment.

42. Alton Deville of Atlanta to Central Committee, 12 November 1972, Reel 36, Black Panther Documents: "Raid [on] party's office, November 9, 1972 at approximately 10:30 AM... members... held at gunpoint." See also Newton to Charlie Watkins, Atlanta, 2 February 1972, Reel 37: "I agree that having a discussion group to go over books will prove to be very helpful." Cf. *The Black Panther*, 16 October 1971: Party considers moving headquarters to Atlanta. The Panther's former comrade Stokely Carmichael had by then formed his All African People's Revolutionary Party, and he still had an ideological conflict with the *Oaklander*. Carmichael to Newton, 7 February 1973, Reel 36, Black Panther Documents: "Dear Brother Newton... we are the victims of race and class exploitation but we think the racial denominator is the largest." Of course, "race" as far as Africans in the U.S. were concerned, involved descendants of an unpaid sector of the working class—the enslaved—making it difficult to disentangle these two fraught rubrics. Benevolently, Newton accepted "honorary membership" in Carmichael's party and extended same to him and his comrades vis-à-vis the BPP: Newton to Muhammad Ahmad, Cleveland, 26 April 1972, Reel 37. See also Newton to Republic of New Afrika, 13 September 1969, Reel 2.

43. Intercommunal Survival Center, in Seattle, to Central Committee, 27 June 1973, Reel 14, Black Panther Documents: the NCLC seeking to "destroy" CP while pursuing a "queer" and contradictory approach to the BPP: attacks then engaged. Cf. Press Release, 27 May 1970, Carton 75, NAACP Papers-UCB: "Armed thugs attempt murder of four [Socialist Workers Party] campaign supporters,"

However, to be fair, it was not as if the BPP were only at dagger's point with the CP. Inner party tensions continued to wrack. "Masai" Hewitt, who had done so much for the organization, was expelled "for life" in 1973.⁴⁴ Months later, David Hilliard resigned and then was "expelled...for life" since he violated a directive to shun Brenda Pressley, who had been expelled for "child molesting" Hilliard's nephew.⁴⁵ Then Robert Bay, a stalwart comrade, was "expelled...for life."⁴⁶ David Lubell, the crafty Manhattan attorney, who had served the BPP faithfully, was also on the outs by 1973.⁴⁷ By 1977 there was fierce internal debate that ensnared Newton on what was termed "sisters going out with non-party men."⁴⁸

the "6th attack on the headquarters or functions of the SWP and YSA [Young Socialists Alliance] in the past 2 years."

44. Inner-Party Memorandum, 10 January 1973, Reel 14, Black Panther Documents. In 1975 Hewitt was residing at 4352 Victoria Place in L.A.: Larson and McGee, *Neutralized*, 142. Cf. KABC-TV interview with Elaine Brown and Hewitt, n.d., Reel 41, Black Panther Documents: "We have a new program starting in Watts...103rd and Hickory."

45. Inner-Party Memorandum, 26 February 1974, Reel 14, Black Panther Documents. Hilliard had a difficult time and not just internally. See *The Black Panther*, 23 November 1972: At his parole hearing he was judged by Henry Kerr, a Republican who joined the LAPD in 1937 and reached the rank of Inspector by 1953, while another member of the board, Manley J. Bowler, also a Republican, was a federal prosecutor for six years. Cf. Congressman Dellums to California Adult Authority, 5 October 1972, Reel 50, Black Panther Documents: "I have known the Hilliard family for fifteen years."

46. Inner-Party Memorandum, 15 May 1974, Reel 14, Black Panther Documents.

47. Martin Kenner to "Dear Gwen and Huey," 11 September 1973, Reel 30, Black Panther Documents: "I do agree that David Lubell did not do the job I had thought he would and that he left the party...with many headaches that a more competent attorney would not have.... he did lend us over \$10,000 at a time when we desperately needed it.... it was only the murder of George [Jackson] and Random House's desire to profit by it that gave us the dough that pulled us out...at a time when his firm was nearly broke. His firm did in fact go broke...that is why he had to go to work for Bert's [Schneider, Hollywood titan] father. And that may be why he was as incompetent with us as he was." Cf. Newton to Lubell, Fine and Schaap, 7 October 1970, Reel 52: "Termination" of relations. Cf. Margaret Burnham to "Comrade Huey," 1 December 1970, Series 2, Box 42, Newton Foundation: There is also a Davis scribble on this note which includes: "David [Lubell] sorry for jumping down your throat that afternoon. Hope this will help clear the air."

48. Roni Hagopian to Newton, 21 August 1977, Reel 14c. Cf. Jeannie Nelson to Elaine Brown, 12 January 1976, Series 2, Box 41, Newton Foundation: She portrayed herself as being in love with Newton, but Charles Garry would not transmit her message. Will Brown? Adds, "is he shy, is it because I'm white...much personal anguish." Karen Wald to Newton, ca. 1970, Reel 45, Black Panther Documents: "I miss you...despite everything my head tells me, I am still unable to relate to any other man." From "Gwen" to "Servant," 13 October 1973, Reel 2: "A Sharon Bailey from Los Angeles would like to talk to the Servant...sent him 2 letters...would like to talk to him." Cf. Jane Ann Floumoy to Virna Canson, 8 July 1975, Part VI, Box C74, NAACP Papers-LC: Bill Lane of the Beverly Hills-Hollywood branch was slated to interview her for a job. He offered her a drink. She was "informed by the secretary if I would agree to relate personally (sexually) to the head of the firm such a job could easily be acquired." She was "astounded" to be deemed "prey." This "turned [her] off," as she wondered how many others have been victimized." Roy Wilkins and Dr. Hudson received copies of her letter. Cf. Barbara Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment*, New York: Anchor, 1983.

"We do not support the African Liberation Day Support Committee," was their peremptory conclusion in 1973 since, it was said, they were supportive of both Stokely Carmichael and Eldridge Cleaver and failed to acknowledge the BPP's own role in the inspiring 1972 launch of what had become a popular initiative.⁴⁹

Davis was becoming a lightning rod for diverse forces. The *Los Angeles Free Press* wondered, in a remarkable full-page display, why didn't she have more to say about what they saw as troubling events in Prague and Warsaw, where her comrades reigned?⁵⁰

Her comrade Jarvis Tyner—brother of pianist, composer, and bandleader extraordinaire McCoy Tyner—gushed that "Angela opened the way" in that "Blacks identified with her fight and became interested in getting a better understanding of socialism." He also reprimanded the BPP and their "recent accusations" that she "had deserted the Black struggle."⁵¹

Increasingly confident, Prof. Davis audaciously rejected appearance on the television program of the then popular Dick Cavett, after it was insisted by ABC-TV that she appear alongside the lizard-tongued demagogue William F. Buckley or fellow reactionary William Rusher, to "balance her views."⁵²

Meanwhile, seeking to stay above the fray, Davis gave support to Black antiwar dissident from Watts, Billy Dean Smith. Post-acquittal, his case became her cause. This soldier had been charged with killing two officers in Bien Hoa, Vietnam, in a prototypical case of "fragging."⁵³ Six feet tall with a narrow waist and broad shoulders, sporting a receding hairline and a bushy black mustache, he was only 24 in 1972 and, understandably, did not exhibit a ready smile. With roots in Texarkana, he sought to avoid the draft by claiming BPP membership, but was inducted by March 1970 and accused of fragging a scant year later.⁵⁴ By November 1972 he was acquitted of the two murders in his case, that was billed as "the first 'fragging' trial held in the United States."⁵⁵ Still, since March 1971 he had been detained, like Davis, in a tiny prison cell.⁵⁶ Sensing a kindred soul, a generous and altruistic Prof. Davis in November 1972 donated \$1000 to him,

49. Inner-Party Memorandum, 26 April 1973, Reel 14, Black Panther Documents.

50. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 15 September 1972. Cf. Lodge, *Red Road to Freedom*, 390: Ronnie Kasrils, a South African Communist who happened to be Jewish observed that "Many Black comrades, particularly workers, continued to sympathize with Stalin's tough practices."

51. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 29 September 1972: Said journalist Earl Ofari, many harbored "suspicions of many radicals," including the CP. See also File on Davis, Box 2, ACLU Records-UCLA.

52. "Black Commentator," July-August 1972, Reel 2, Black Panther Documents. Cf. *The Black Panther*, 24 February 1972: Newton "devastates Buckley" on his program *Firing Line*.

53. *People's World*, 5 August 1972.

54. *People's World*, 30 March 1972.

55. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 16 November 1972. Cf. *The Black Panther*, 25 March 1972, story on La Bruce Eaton, graduate of high school in San Bernardino; he joined the Air Force, but by May 1970 was detained in Taiwan because of drug charges.

56. *The Black Panther*, 23 November 1972.

along with another \$1000 to build a hospital in Vietnam, and yet another \$1000 to the defense of Ruchell Magee—all from an award to her from then socialist Bulgaria in the name of the man who most insistently raised the alarm about the ascension of fascism in the 1930s: Georgi Dimitrov.⁵⁷

An essential aspect of antiwar activism was defense of Black military men, for example, in the uprising on the U.S. naval vessel *Kitty Hawk*.⁵⁸ “Racial violence hits Midway naval base” was a typical story in the Black press. Congressman Augustus Hawkins decried that “U.S. military threatened by racism while the NAACP chose to ‘plan’ a ‘strategy’ to help Black sailors.”⁵⁹ The Panthers who had long taken interest in matters military chimed in, reminding that “You can’t be Black and Navy too.”⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Report, 16 November 1972, Reel 14, Black Panther Documents.

⁵⁸ *People's World*, 18 November 1972. Truhe, *Against All Tides*. See also *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 18 January 1973. *The Black Panther*, 17 March 1972: In Mountain View Park in Southeast San Diego, a demonstration in defense of Black sailors from the *Kitty Hawk* was held, as they were now being court-martialed. During interracial fighting, 50 were injured, while 25 Black sailors were held in the brig, among 5000 sailors aboard. In the edition of 24 March 1972, see story of Marine recruit James Simmons brutalized at Camp Pendleton. There was an inevitable reaction: *The Black Panther*, 17 February 1973: At Morse High School in San Diego, a demonstration is launched protesting the transfer of two teachers, one of whom is “coordinator of ‘freedom fighters,’ the latter including students in the San Diego who study and teach Black history, English, math, reading” and “Judo and Karate.” *The Black Panther*, 28 April 1973: Walter Edner at Camp Pendleton complains about harassment at Pendleton, involving the “wearing of the natural” amidst demands that his hair be cut. A naval base in San Diego was deemed to be “the largest U.S. naval base in the world.” See undated report, ca. 1970s, Part VI, Box C77, NAACP Papers-LC. See *The Black Panther*, 19 February 1977: “400 rally to ‘Free Camp Pendleton 14.’” *The Black Panther*, 18 June 1977: 500 “march and rally for embattled Marines” in Occochee for the Camp Pendleton 14. See also *The Black Panther*, 25 February 1978: Private Eddie Page of Pendleton, released after August 1977 court martial. Cf. Ezell Ware, Jr., program director of Oakland-National Guard to Newton, 10 September 1980, Reel 1, Black Panther Documents: “Dear Huey,”... Thank you for speaking to us, “enlightening and enjoyable for the entire class.” Of course, the correspondent is Black. See also “How the Black Panthers Plan to Plunge America into a Communist Revolution,” 10 January 1970, FCSF F1 D3 109, CSU-Fullerton: “How the Panthers are working inside the U.S. Armed Forces.” The strength of the ultra-right in San Diego helped to generate a counter-reaction. See e.g., *Oakland Tribune*, 6 February 1976: Trial of Secret Army Organization (SAO) in S.D., “firebombings...burglaries”; also, anti-Jewish. See edition of 7 January 1976: FBI denies ties to SAO founder Howard Godfrey—who had been an FBI informer. For more on Godfrey see *Los Angeles Times*, 4 January 1976. See also Wilbert Hauser, Oral History: This San Diego Panther joined the military in order to become expert in using weapons. He was stationed in West Germany where, despite racism from fellow soldiers, he felt he was treated better than in his homeland. For in S.D., cops would drag him to a lumberyard, beat him, then take him to jail—and, at times, to a hospital: “And then from the hospital, we’d go back to the jail.” This was at a time in the 1970s when there were 100 Panthers in this border town. By 1980 he was shot by local cops: “Five times. On 30th and Imperial.” Propaganda to the contrary, he was among the comrades who stridently opposed white supremacy—as opposed to those defined as “white.” “All of our attorneys were white. All of the money basically that came to help support the Panther Party came from the white community, yeah...including a lot of Jews.”

⁵⁹ *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 30 November 1972.

⁶⁰ *The Black Panther*, 16 November 1972.

Beyond the obvious—antiracist solidarity, influencing the military progressively, etc.—there was further reason to highlight cases like those of Smith and the *Kitty Hawk*. For at Camp Pendleton, due south of L.A., the Marines trained the LAPD in house-to-house combat techniques, and what was dubbed, without euphemism, as “efficient methods of killing with the M-16 machine gun.” Dangerously, all the cops instructed were described as “white.”⁶¹ Even the NAACP stirred from its slumber to address the “issue of the escalating activities of the KKK in Southern California” which was “serious.” There was a “rash of cross burnings...active campaigns of their Grand Wizard,” and the uncovering of a “large cache of weapons.”⁶² Then the inevitable happened. Thirteen Black Marines were accused of assaulting seven of their fellow leathernecks of European ancestry. They thought they were breaking up a Klan meeting when they broke into the wrong room.⁶³ What had misled them was that all too many Marines routinely wore KKK insignia and uttered racist slurs.⁶⁴

In addition to rushing to the defense of beleaguered Black military men, Prof. Davis had also begun to collaborate with future Nobel Laureate Toni Morrison, then an editor, on her well-received autobiography, which necessarily involved a Russian-language edition.⁶⁵ In the process, Morrison became a resolute defender of the former political prisoner,⁶⁶ just as in the year following her acquittal Davis

61. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 18 August 1972.

62. Memo from Vima Canson, ca. 1976, Carton 38, NAACP-UCB.

63. Clipping, 1 December 1976, Carton 38, NAACP-UCB.

64. *California Sun-Reporter*, 30 December 1976.

65. Toni Morrison to Davis, 5 August 1976, Box 1268, Random House Records. The diplomatic Morrison was able to bridge gaps others could not traverse. See Huey Newton, *To Die for the People: The Writings of Huey P. Newton*, New York: Random House, 1972, ix: He thanks “my editor Toni Morrison.” See also Morrison to Newton, 23 May 1972, Reel 41, Black Panther Documents: “Dear Huey...it was a genuine pleasure working with you” on this project. This letter is also on Reel 12 of this vast collection of Panther documents. See also Morrison to Newton, 12 October 1973, Box 1517, Random House Records: “Saw repeat of you and [William F.] Buckley. Tremendous! You demolished him perfectly, gently logically. I really loved it.” In this latter collection, see also Morrison to Stokely Carmichael, 30 March 1972, Box 1265. In Box 1042, see correspondence on New York Panther 21 trial.

66. Toni Morrison to Jim Silberman of “Bantam,” 1 February 1974, Box 1268, Random House Records: “Like most people this reporter wants to use Angela’s life for some personal reasons...not to carp...requirement of Angela to meet somebody else’s need...Angela is the fiercest woman I have ever met and I come from a long line of fierce women. And I mean fierce literally not accidentally. Her hatreds are monumental and she has no sense of danger...she is also incredibly, phenomenally disciplined.” This analyst had made a “cry for more ‘humaneness’...it is a word white people use when they want to alter an ‘uppity’ or ‘fearless’ nigger...I have been on extremely intimate terms with her and am probably one of the three or four persons who do not idolize her...she does not think the way most people do...I was [witness to] a brawl with her at an airport just a few weeks ago—a political brawl with a white man who spoke unkindly to a Black woman [that] Angela didn’t even know. She walked some distance to get into the battle before I could bat an eye. The brawl stopped not when the police were called but when the white man ran away. She risks her life easily—athletically she moves always toward feats that could end in death...the ways in which she has risked not only her life but mine as well...Angela is not ‘feminine’...responds to life in a manner that can only be described as

was a driving force in the formation of an organization—the National Alliance Against Political and Racist Repression—designed to liberate political prisoners and prevent same.⁶⁷ (Morrison, a kind of bridge over troubled waters, also served as an intermediary, it was reported, for the Panthers to raise funds abroad.⁶⁸)

Davis carried the torch the next year to her old campus, speaking at UCLA for the first time since 1970. She bathed in the adulation from a crowd comprised of 90% Black students who greeted her with an earthshaking minutes-long ovation.⁶⁹ There was not just an overflow audience at UCLA, but it spilled over to the wider community, to enrollees in the CP-initiated Institute of Marxist Studies in L.A., at their latest headquarters at 1251 St. Andrews Place. Just before Davis arrived in Westwood, Emily Gibson—better known as a perceptive reporter for the *Sentinel*—was teaching a course for the CP based on Henry Winston's book, *Strategy for a Black Agenda*.⁷⁰

On the other hand, besides clashing with the CP, Newton was branching into new ventures, including starring possibly in a film in conjunction with Belgian comrades. The man who answered to the name "Comrade Burr Jerger" said he had "written the North Vietnamese to help us 'discover' an...Oriental actress to play opposite you" and that Jane Fonda was supposedly attached to this project: "I would love to play opposite Mr. Newton," were words ascribed to her. The would-be cineaste tended to "favor [George] McGovern" in the 1972 presidential race but conceded that "another Nixon win would give more impetus to our film." For he foresaw a possible win by the South Dakotan not ending well, since already he was "backtracking and selling out to the establishment and I wonder if the only

masculine...meaning adventuresome, unemotional, logical, fearless...she is not in way 'a girl.' If this book were about a man," speaking of her autobiography, "certain problems of credibility would never arise...we were told that while imprison[ed] Angela had to be protected from inmates who wanted to kill her because she was a Communist...response to her in jail was not that at all...she does not tuck her politics away. Never. Not ever in her dreams. Not in the bathtub. Not on the toilet...even her choice...of males is determined by their politics...[unlike Malcolm] Angela has no such sensational personal ingredients as drugs and sex to report...how nice it would be if Angela were really Jane Fonda and not Joan D' Arc" [emphasis-original]. Cf. Morrison to Branton, 9 August 1972, Box 11, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard: On Davis, "no editor is better suited to this work than I am."

67. Aptheker, *Communists in Closets*, 64: At their founding convention in Chicago, Charlene Mitchell "advised...nobody in the party was to support...[a] resolution under any circumstances" on queer "political prisoners."

68. Martin Kenner to "Dear Servant," 20 June 1972, Reel 30, Black Panther Documents: "Toni Morrison wanted me to communicate to you the fact that an author here in Chicago claims that he can get funds from abroad for the party. He is writing a book with Muhammad Ali and was in on the four million 'loan' from the Libyan government to the Nation of Islam." Kenner was likely referring to Richard Durham, firmly within the orbit of the CP.

69. *People's World*, 27 April 1974.

70. *People's World*, 2 February 1974. For more on this institute, see the editions of 19 May 1973, and 9 June 1973.

answer isn't yours completely,"⁷¹ a possible oblique reference to armed struggle and/or enhanced militancy. Jerger's background was assuring to those considering his ambitious project. Born in Chicago in 1917 and a graduate of the University of Chicago law school, he attended UCLA and ran for a seat in the California state legislature in 1948 "on the issue of teacher loyalty," he asserted, "which I opposed." As a journalist in the early 1950s he portrayed Las Vegas "as a payoff center for heroin traffickers by the Mafia high command...I was up for a hit," he claimed.⁷² Under unrelenting pressure from the authorities,⁷³ Newton decided to back out of the project.⁷⁴

But he considered yet another, unsurprising given the party's close ties over the years to Hollywood funding. Their primary funder in this highly capitalized community was producer Jerome Berton Schneider, known as "Bert." He was 42 years old in 1975, had attended Cornell and was a lean 6'4" and 165 pounds. His father was Chairman of the Board of Columbia Pictures, his brother Stanley was president and, thought the FBI, he "made large loans and donations" to the BPP.⁷⁵ A top-flight producer himself, he was "lukewarm" about a BPP movie project, said advisor Martin Kenner. "Potential directors" for this undetailed project included Arthur Penn—who helmed *Bonnie and Clyde*—and Ossie Davis, but "not an egomaniac like Melvin" (Van Peebles, perhaps?). Davis "played a large role in helping the Committee to Defend the Panthers raise money," whereas another helmsman, Paul Williams, was "approached by the FBI and told to cool

71. Burr Jerger to "Comrade Huey," 6 September 1972, Reel 41, Black Panther Documents. L.A. Panther Renee "Peaches" Moore was also involved in the culture industry, music in her case: *Los Angeles Free Press*, 21 July 1972.

72. CV of Burr Jerger, n.d., Reel 41, Black Panther Documents.

73. *The Black Panther*, 22 February 1975: CIA leader Richard Helms promises that the BPP will receive "increased coverage." See also BPP v. Donald Alexander, ca. 1974, Vertical File-Black Panthers, AAMLO: In 1969 the Internal Revenue Service formed a unit to harass politicians, and the party was "singled out" in this campaign that was also tied to the U.S. Treasury Department and the FBI. *The Black Panther*, 15 May 1976: U.S. Senate committee says BPP "targeted for 233 of the 295 FBI actions taken against 'Black Nationalist Hate Groups.'" See also Huey P. Newton, "War Against the Panthers," 7. In 1969 U.S. Attorney General John Mitchell said the Justice Department would "wipe out the Black Panther Party by the end of 1969." Newton himself was "shot, ambushed, followed and verbally and physically threatened and abused.... in every apartment or home in which he has lived since 1966, the premises have been burglarized, searched and bugged," and for the "last thirteen years" he had been subjected to an "average of two trials per year." Cf. U.S. Congress, 92nd Congress, 1st Session, House Report No. 92-470: "Gun Barrel Politics: The Black Panther Party, 1966-1971," Report by the Committee on Internal Security...Together with Minority Views, Washington: GPO, 1971. Cf. Jones, *What We Stood For*, 62: This former Karenga comrade opines that 1969 was "the year that things began to fall apart in the US organization."

74. Newton to Jerger, 24 May 1972, Reel 41, Black Panther Documents. Cf. David Lubell to Frank Wiering of Katholieke Radio Omroep Hilversum, Holland, 15 April 1971, Reel 30: Contract with BPP.

75. FBI Report, 17 March 1975, 15719403-119 and 2," 2 May 1972, 157-6415, Reel 57, Black Panther Documents.

it with the Panthers. He freaked" and the project remained unrealized.⁷⁶ It was unclear what film was in mind, but Bert Schneider was asked by Newton's chief aide to register titles for possible films, including "Soledad Brother...Blood in My Eye...Soledad...Seize the Time," the latter being the title of a Seale memoir.⁷⁷ The party commanded members to promote the film *State of Siege*, a gripping drama about strife in South America,⁷⁸ and continued to liaise with actor Marlon Brando, hailing his backing of Native Americans in his rejection of a vaunted "Oscar" for his role in *The Godfather*, in the face of "rude catcalls."⁷⁹ (Newton asked the growingly corpulent thespian to fund a lawsuit on the party's behalf.⁸⁰) Actor and comedian Richard Pryor, too, liaised with Newton,⁸¹ while television star Don Cornelius of *Soul Train*, raised funds for the party's Community Learning Center.⁸²

Increasingly, a star Hollywood producer was playing a preeminent role in funding the party.⁸³ *Easy Rider*, the era-defining blockbuster, was among Schneider's producing credits. He was the top financial contributor to Bobby Seale's race for the mayoralty of Oakland in 1973 (Stanley Sheinbaum of L.A., married to an heiress of the Warner Bros. fortune, was number 3 on this list.⁸⁴) Bluesman John Lee Hooker was not part of this elevated group, though he did endorse the Panther's campaign.⁸⁵ He was contrasted with singer, dancer and

76. Martin Kenner to "Dear Gwen," 8 June 1972, Reel 30, Black Panther Documents. On the same reel, see Ed Bullins to "Dear Brother Huey," 28 April 1972: This protean Black playwright wanted to collaborate with him.

77. Gwen Fountain to Schneider, 15 March 1972, Reel 30, Black Panther Documents.

78. Inner-Party Memorandum, 14 February 1974, Reel 14, Black Panther Documents.

79. *The Black Panther*, 7 April 1973.

80. Newton to Brando, 2 February 1974, Reel 16, Black Panther Documents.

81. *The Black Panther*, 16 June 1975.

82. *The Black Panther*, 13 March 1976.

83. Note Secured by Deed of Trust for \$85,000 signed by Schneider, 30 August 1973, Reel 53, Black Panther Documents. Attorney Thomas Silk to Elaine Brown, 12 January 1977, Reel 2: Schneider "loaned" BPP corporation, "Stronghold," \$85,000 in 1973. Cf. *Oakland Tribune*, 5 February 1978: Allegation of fraud in obtaining bail for Newton in 1974: Schneider implicated, denoted as producer of *Easy Rider*, *Last Picture Show*, *Hearts and Minds*. Elaine Brown also implicated. See *The Black Panther*, 16 December 1978, and 25 March 1979: Praise for Schneider vehicle *Days of Heaven*. See also Newton, *To Die for the People*, ix: "My good friend, [Bert] Schneider whose generous encouragement greatly aided me in difficult times."

84. "Statement of Contributions in Excess of \$500 for Seale for Mayor." Schneider, \$7500, and Sheinbaum, \$1000, Reel 14, Black Panther Documents. See also Schneider to Paul Halvonik, 24 July 1981, Reel 30: After this lawyer requested that Schneider pay fees owed by Newton, the producer replied: "I am not your client. If I were I would have fired you long ago...you owe me \$1500...take your best shot." Schneider to Halvonik, 6 July 1981, same reel: "I have been involved in Huey Newton's defense effort for over 10 years and I am not just some fat cat with a check and no brains." Halvonik to Newton, 29 July 1981, same reel: "That moron Schneider." Schneider was so respected in the party that exile William Brent suggested laughingly, perhaps sardonically, in 1976 that he be promoted as a Democratic nominee for president since we "need a candidate with a socialist [agenda]." See Brent Interview on Cuban Radio, ca. 1976, Reel 12.

85. *The Black Panther*, 28 October 1972.

choreographer James Brown, who "Souled Out," and Sammy Davis, Jr. and his hugging of President Nixon.⁸⁶ Seale was endorsed by Coretta Scott King, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, Ossie Davis, politico Ronald V. Dellums—and Hooker.⁸⁷

Yoked with Elaine Brown's race for Oakland City Council,⁸⁸ the candidate was endorsed by the Alice B. Toklas Democratic Club and the allied "Gay Men's Political Action Group," to whom they made a special appeal by screening "Free Gay Films" at a coffeehouse on 1437 Harrison Street.⁸⁹ Although the Panther candidates did not prevail, the day after the election, said their periodical, "Bobby was interviewed by different reporters from all over the world. From Russia, Europe, the African press."⁹⁰ The versatile Brown also found time to release an album of her music via Motown—*Until We're Free*—for which L.A.'s Horace Tapscott was the arranger.⁹¹ Losing elections did not improve Brown's mood. She reproved the "inbred whiteism [*sic*]" which she viewed as a culprit, since "Black voters" backed her, she said, but "white voters who gave white 'liberal' candidates their votes did not vote for [her] and other progressive Black candidates," leaving a "lesson for us."⁹²

Newton and his comrades combined their social welfare programs with the added attraction of luring the masses by deploying popular culture. A harbinger arose in 1972 when 6000 arrived at the Oakland Auditorium for a day-long session depicted as an "Antiwar, African Liberation, Voter Registration-Survival Conference" with giveaways of food and shoes and performances by bluesman John Lee Hooker and the band, Tower of Power.⁹³ While Prof. Davis was on trial, the Oakland Auditorium was the venue for a rally that featured a wildly popular band with a cult-like following, the Grateful Dead.⁹⁴ One of this band's most devoted fans, former UCLA basketball star Bill Walton, visited the party's "Community Learning Center" in Oakland accompanied by his "new advisor," Panther counsel Charles Garry, whom the towering athlete called in the

86. *The Black Panther*, 4 November 1972.

87. *The Black Panther*, 12 May 1973. Cf. the 21 September 1974 edition: Arson besets Dellums's Oakland office. And 17 August 1974: Dellums pictured—appropriately—as a left-handed hitter in a baseball game.

88. *The Black Panther*, 20 May 1972: "Minister of Information, Elaine Brown" to run for office in Oakland.

89. Program, ca. 1973, Reel 14, Black Panther Documents. Cf. *The Black Panther*, 14 April 1973: "Gay meeting for Bobby and Elaine." The Toklas Club, named for Alice B. Toklas, life partner of writer Gertrude Stein, was billed as the "only Gay Democratic club in the world," and the two Panthers were the "only candidates to support Gay Equality."

90. *The Black Panther*, 28 April 1973.

91. *The Black Panther*, 24 March 1972.

92. *The Black Panther*, 19 April 1975.

93. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 21 July 1972. Hooker was a Panther comrade and, in an interview, complained about Elvis Presley, while recalling his own benefit concert at Soledad: "I really enjoyed doing it...free of charge," *The Black Panther*, 28 October 1972. For more on Hooker, see *The Black Panther*, 24 February 1972.

94. *The Black Panther*, 13 February 1971.

complimentary jargon of the time, a "Right on person."⁹⁵ Elaine Brown was pictured alongside the successful coach of the basketball franchise, the San Francisco Warriors, the gritty and bruising Al Attles.⁹⁶

Meanwhile, as the Cleavers had rebuked Cuba, Newton moved there. Although ensnarled in various disputes,⁹⁷ at the time of the Davis acquittal he claimed that the party still had 38 chapters and he had made about \$400,000 through lectures, books and the like since leaving prison in the recent past.⁹⁸ He retained cachet with Myles Horton of the Highlander Research and Education Center, an influence on the late Dr. King, with the Tennessean enthusing that he "enjoyed our visit with you."⁹⁹ The eventual eminent scholar R.J.M. Blackett was among those lining up to study him and his party.¹⁰⁰ He was pondering forays into new realms, such as environmental justice, not then on most agendas.¹⁰¹ He had an invitation to visit China, but carped that the U.S. authorities "followed me to Hong Kong," suggestive of why he would want to escape their jurisdiction.¹⁰² He had embarked on a sojourn in Scandinavia.¹⁰³

955. *The Black Panther*, 8 February 1975.

966. *The Black Panther*, 23 June 1975.

977. Deposition of J. Herman Blake, 26 November 1974, Reel 30, Black Panther Documents: He claims that he authored the book attributed to Newton, *Revolutionary Suicide*: "I was visiting him [Newton] regularly" "in California Penal Colony" and would arrive at 9 a.m. and remain until 4 p.m. He enlisted Leronne Bennett, Donald Freed and Alex Haley to read the manuscript, and says he is owed \$10,000. Cf. Statement by Elaine Brown, ca. 1972, Reel 52. Newton recruited her and David Horowitz to clean up Blake mess: "We worked literally day and night" and also brought on board Donald Freed. (See also Blake to "Masai" Hewitt, 1 March 1971, Reel 15: Kant "is a bitch.") See also Paul Harris, San Francisco Law Collective, to "Dear Huey," 8 September 1980, Reel 30: Owed \$4000. "I'm tired of writing B[e]rt [Schneider]...needs the rest of the fee." On the same reel, see Law Offices of Michael Kennedy to Bert Schneider, 1 August 1979: Payment of "legal fees" of \$168,000 requested. On same reel, "Final Billing" from Attorneys Halvonik & Halvonik of Berkeley to Schneider, ca. 1981: Owed \$59634.70 by Newton.

983. Typescript of interview with Newton, 26 June 1972, Reel 15, Black Panther Documents. See also *Los Angeles Times*, 6 August 1972. Reprinted in *The Black Panther*, 9 September 1972: Newton distanced himself from other tendencies among Blacks, asserting that the BPP was "not a separatist party...yet can't fairly fit us into the so-called integrationist line." See also Contract, 8 February 1974, Box 1517, Random House Records: Newton receives \$12,500 advance for the book *To Die For the People*.

999. Myles Horton to Newton, 2 June 1972, Reel 15, Black Panther Documents.

1000. Blackett to Newton, 22 May 1972, Reel 15, Black Panther Documents.

1001. Jane Resnick of Environmental Protection Center, Inglewood, to Newton, 6 July 1972, Reel 12, Black Panther Documents: Seeking assistance in campaign against lead poisoning. Newton to Resnick, 4 September 1972, Reel 12: He agrees.

1002. Typescript of interview with Newton, 26 June 1972, Reel 15, Black Panther Documents. See *The Black Panther*, 22 April 1972: "Progressive Americans led by Panthers, Return from China" led by "Masai" Hewitt; delegation of 20 spend one month. During a layover in Vancouver they are "warned" by "U.S. lackeys, Canadian custom agents, who rudely...demanded they remain...missed the only flight to Hong Kong."

1003. Dymally, the Reverend Cecil Williams, Father Neil, Lloyd Barbee of Wisconsin legislature, to "Dear Scandinavian Friends," February 1973, Reel 15, Black Panther Documents: Newton "has been invited by you to Scandinavia."

By 1972 Sweden—by far, with 56 subscriptions to the party organ—was far in advance globally.¹⁰⁴ In Copenhagen, said his comrades, he “drew the largest crowd the Danish capital had seen in ten years” as the “visit was front-paged throughout.”¹⁰⁵ However, the party was at odds with California’s leading pol, Dymally, on the contentious issue of Israel, which did not bode well.¹⁰⁶

Despite the attractions of Scandinavia, it was in November 1974 that Panther exile William Brent bumped into him in Cuba. Metaphorically, he recalled, a “private yacht had brought him” and his spouse nearby and put them on a small boat that “capsized” but “waves washed them ashore.”¹⁰⁷ As Newton recounted, he flew on a “private plane” to L.A. “where I had friends who could help us leave the country” for Cuba. It was a “very small two seater” and then they drove across the border to Mexico and flew to Puerto Vallarta and took a small boat to a small island, then were driven over six days to Mexico City, injudiciously “not far from the U.S. Embassy.” Somehow from there they made their way to a 40-foot sailboat and spent five days en route to Cuba, but somehow were “low on gas” while only 15 miles from Cuba, leading to the arrival Brent described.¹⁰⁸

* * *

Despite the persistence of the Panthers and the glow emitted from the Davis acquittal, the LAPD continued to run roughshod over Black L.A., escalating the tactic of “throwaways” or “extra guns” that cops planted on those they shot in order to establish a claim of justifiable homicide. By 1972 there were 333 Black officers, an improvement from recent decades, but these cops lived in constant

104. List, ca. 1972, Reel 9, Black Panther Documents.

105. *The Black Panther*, 31 March 1973. The BPP continued to exert positive influence abroad. See Letter from “Polynesian Panther Party” of Auckland, March 1973, Reel 11, Black Panther Documents. For more on the PPP, see *The Black Panther*, 28 September 1974 and the edition of 18 August 1975. On Reel 14 see Elaine Brown to Black Panthers of Queensland, Australia, 19 June 1972.

106. Pamphlet by Dymally, 7 November 1973, “Israel Must Live,” Reel 12, Black Panther Documents: He was leaving for his second trip to Israel. “Anti-Israel voices have been raised in the Black community. Some Black Nationalists openly identify with...Arab states...Arabs were among the active traders of Black slaves in world history.” Cf. Contrasting BPP view, David Du Bois to Newton, 2 May 1974, Reel 12: Party position paper on “Middle East” includes reference to Israeli “colonization” while correcting the notion that Iranians are Arabs. See *The Black Panther*, July 1980: Newton shakes hands with Yasir Arafat, Palestinian leader, in the midst of a tour of Lebanon, Jordan and—apparently—Israel. Application for Visa from Islamic Republic of Iran from Gwen Fontaine and Newton, 12 December 1978, Reel 45, Black Panther Documents: Duration of stay, “one week.” Newton to Iranian Consulate-San Francisco, 12 November 1979, Reel 45: “Full support” for return of Shah to stand trial; recounts solidarity with Iranian students.

107. Brent, *Long Time Gone*, 234.

108. Undated report from Newton, Series I, Box 47, Newton Foundation.

fear of being subjected to unfair discipline by higher-ups—or worse.¹⁰⁹ “There is no doubt,” said the *Sentinel*, “that there is a racial revolt brewing within [the] LAPD.”¹¹⁰ By 1975 litigation revealed that the LAPD kept a “Secret File” on “200 Black juveniles” for malign purposes.¹¹¹

There was also a revolt brewing in Black L.A. more generally against the LAPD. The pot was boiling in 1976 when Anthony Brown was killed by cops as two eyewitnesses watched. The usual ritual ensued: a few days of television and radio coverage, two public demonstrations of 1000 and 1500, respectively. Yet Bert Babero remained dissatisfied: He berated the NAACP which “has done absolutely nothing,” had “become complacent” and was mired hopelessly in “inertia,”¹¹² a direct result of a capitulation to the Red Scare and the decapitation of the left in previous decades.

Those Negroes seeking Valhalla by exiting the county were disappointed. Effie Smith had done just that, first residing in Riverside, then back to Pomona, in eastern L.A. County. Yet, she cried in 1974, “since I moved...I have been living in fear of police harassment,” making for a “highly dangerous” dilemma: “this city,” she concluded, “is highly racially prejudiced” and was “practicing colonialism”¹¹³—vindicating theorists who had seen the Black Question as a matter of Internal Colonialism. The Imperial Valley, scores of miles east of San Diego, almost reaching the doorstep of Yuma, Arizona, and just north of Mexicali, was also distant from justice. By 1975 NAACP membership, said the leader of the branch, “fell far below the previous year,” though “police brutality” had not ceased: He thought that his district “is far removed from the mainstream,” but this was hardly evident.¹¹⁴

There was little doubt as well that the blow inflicted externally on the Panthers—who had as a prime mission to push back against the LAPD—combined with the internecine strife that debilitated the group, to create a climate for the rising of newer trends.¹¹⁵ As noted, Panthers like the late “Bunchy” Carter

109. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 14 September 1972.

110. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 7 September 1972.

111. *The Black Panther*, 8 February 1975.

112. Bert Babero to Roy Wilkins, 13 August 1976, Part VI, Box C76, NAACP Papers-LC. See also *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 24 October 1976: Brown, 38, formerly of the military, was depressed; reputedly he spoke six languages.

113. Effie Smith to NAACP, 21 December 1974, Part VI, Box C77, NAACP Papers-LC.

114. Majel Y. Baker of El Centro to National Office, 20 March 1975, Part VI, Box C75, NAACP Papers-LC.

115. Of course, there were other forms of strife. See e.g., *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 10 May 1973: Hakim Jamal, formerly of L.A., murdered in Boston by “De Mau Mau,” which had origins in Vietnam, then Chicago. Also known as Allan Donaldson, he was said to be the cousin of the sainted Malcolm X by marriage and had been friendly with Jean Seberg, the ill-fated Hollywood star who befriended the Panthers. “Bunchy” Carter was among those who assailed Jamal. See undated article, Reel 15, Black Panther Documents: He also assayed the influence on him of Frantz Fanon, sketched his ties to Cleaver, and recalled how “I was a Moslem.” See also *Los Angeles Free Press*, 11 May 1973: “Hakim

emerged from networks referred to popularly as “gangs” often taking the names of borders that they dared to cross—“Slauson,” for example—in the face of white supremacist opposition. By October 1972, the *Sentinel* began to pay attention to a “gang” that was referred to as “Crips.”¹¹⁶ (One of the first mentions of this group appeared ironically just above an article on Professor Davis.¹¹⁷) Columnist Booker Griffin opined that “gangs are reflections of destruction of militants,” like the Panthers and their ilk. “[T]he gang scene, the murder scene and the drug scene were on the decline during the heyday of militancy in the Black community,” but all were now surging.¹¹⁸ The perceptive journalist also saw the rise of the “Crips” as a funhouse mirror reflection of the wider society.¹¹⁹ A few weeks later, “Gang War Erupts in Compton” read the distressing headline.¹²⁰ By then receiving coverage were not just the “Crips” but also “Bounty Hunters, Brims, Rangers,” whose members were mostly “15 to 18” but whose numbers were growing since “seventy percent of the Compton police don’t relate to brothers, unless it’s beating them on the head.”¹²¹

Celes King, late of the NAACP, was organizing a “seminar on local gangs” because of a “recent rash of violence.” There was a “considerable increase this year,” it was announced in December 1972, “compared with the past.” Whereas during 1970-71 there were “11 such deaths” that were “attributed to gang warfare,” by then there were “35 deaths so far.”¹²² (Destined to escalate sharply, there were as of April 1973, 20,500 inmates in California and 19,000 a year earlier.¹²³ There was a “fast rising prison population,” a “growing number of inmates.”¹²⁴) In the first of many within coming decades, it was also in December 1972 that competing “gangs...announce[d] a truce” as “they expressed a desire for jobs, recreation and better education.”¹²⁵

Jamal executed in front of family ‘founded the Malcolm X Montessori School in Compton,’ which was visited by famed British actor and activist Vanessa Redgrave.

116. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 12 October 1972.

117. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 10 February 1972. Cf. *Los Angeles Times*, 8 February 1972: “L.A. area terrorized by marauding youngsters...South Central...black gangs...boys and girls, 10 to 17 years old...growing number of robberies, burglaries, purse snatchings, rapes...murders...packs up of fear or five youths...Crips.” Cf. *The Black Panther*, 28 October 1972: Article featuring Trotsky on “Individual Terrorism.”

118. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 26 October 1972.

119. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 9 November 1972: “The so-called ‘responsible’ Black community is nothing but a plastic, phony, exploitative vulturistic [sic] gang at the top. The gang is made up of a closed mutual admiration society of social clubs, professional folk, journalists, politicians, criminals and hustlers...this shadow establishment [is] the same as...the white establishment.”

120. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 30 November 1972.

121. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 12 April 1973. See also the 9 August 1973 edition for more on “gang” proliferation.

122. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 7 December 1972.

123. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 26 April 1973.

124. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 10 May 1973.

125. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 21 December 1972.

Yet by 1976 Woodrow Rideaux, president of the Watts branch of the NAACP, thought he had figured out what was going on. There was a "planned program to promote unrest, violence and murder in Black communities." This diabolical scheme encompassed "rival Black gangs as well as rival political factions" in that since the "Watts Revolt drugs, guns and ammunition have been freely imported into the Los Angeles Black community to promote unrest, violence and murder."¹²⁶

When Tom Bradley—a former cop¹²⁷—made history in his 1973 election as L.A.'s first Black mayor, it was thought that a corner had been turned and what Rideaux espied a few years later was inconceivable. However, the fact that the Watts Summer Festival, despite attracting thousands, was dissolving, made Rideaux's suppositions seem real.¹²⁸ But disturbingly, he was not supported by his fellow Black politicians, including Merv Dymally, who had been on the frontlines, Walter Bremond of the now defunct Black Congress, future Congressman Julian Dixon, Gil Lindsay and Billy Mills. Although, said a full-page advertisement, Bradley had "protested treatment of Russian Jews," he "voted too end [the] City Human Relations Commission," and had "no record" on education.¹²⁹ Extraordinarily, Bradley repudiated an endorsement from Huey P.

¹²⁶ Statement of Woodrow Rideaux, 27 January 1976, Part VI, Box C78, NAACP Papers-LC. *The Black Panther*, 7 December 1976: "Watts NAACP head urges compensation for BPP members slain by FBI provoked violence."

¹²⁷ See Report, 8 December 1969, Box 4718, Tom Bradley Administrative Papers-UCLA: Following an altercation between the LAPD and the BPP, the County Human Relations Commission per Larry Aubrey intervened, aided by the Urban League and NAACP in an attempt to "assist the police in safeguarding the lives of residents." Cleaver, with experience in L.A., referred to Bradley's previous reputation as a "hatchet man." See Remarks by Cleaver, 27 May 1976, Series 2, Box 41, Newton Foundation. Felker-Kantor, *Policing Los Angeles*, 194: By 1986 the LAPD war on drugs reached "New heights...[they] confiscated six and a half tons of cocaine" then, a "7000 percent increase from 1980 and made 47,000 drug related arrests. A 90 percent increase," many of whom were Black men.

¹²⁸ See *Los Angeles Free Press*, 24 August 1973: 80,000 attracted to Watts Summer Festival. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 23 August 1973: "Discord at concert ends Watts Festival...street toughs...overran the Coliseum playing field...60,000" present and 80 arrested "carrying concealed weapons." See also Ron "Crook" Wilkins, "The Truth About the Watts Summer Festival," 1972, Box 69B, Dorothy Healey Papers, CSU Long Beach: There was a "five day arrest total at fifteen hundred" as profiteering ran amok. A founder, Tommy Jacquette, was termed derisively as a "bigger sucker and turncoat than any other person in the festival conspiracy.... the masked torturers and assassins of innocent Black people today will be the spineless Ron Karengas of tomorrow" and "pseudo militant opportunists such as Walter Bremond."

¹²⁹ *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 29 March 1973. See also the 15 March 1973 edition: Bremond backed Jesse Unruh against Bradley, leaving columnist Booker Griffin irate since this preferred candidate was a "red necked politician who practices political apartheid and who talks like [George] Wallace or [John] Stennis in the San Fernando Valley and other white areas." See also edition of 7 June 1973: Columnist Griffin avers that Unruh and the discredited Mayor Yorty collaborated frequently, for instance defeating James Roosevelt for mayor in 1965, then in 1966 defeating Gov. Brown against Reagan, and now seeking to defeat Bradley. Plus, a critical demagogic issue of this era, opposition to busing students for purposes of school desegregation, had begun to assert itself: see edition of 16 November 1972. See also *The Black Panther*, 26 February 1977: "65,000 students boycott Los Angeles schools

Newton.¹³⁰ (Newton and his party endorsed Black Brooklyn Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm for president in 1972, and she didn't appear to repudiate them.¹³¹) Nonetheless, Bradley's stunning triumph was said to "end" the "plantation years."¹³²

As ever, the perceptive columnist Emily Gibson, who also moonlighted at the Institute of Marxist Studies, had the last word. Without trying to "pour cold water" on Bradley's victory, she hastened to point out that "Black representation and Black leadership cannot and will not solve our basic problems so long as the political-economic system of capitalism of this country remains the same," with its ethos, "profits before people." Thus, "what we need desperately is not inclusion into that system which exploits us but an alternative to it." Bearing the fashion of the day, a huge "Afro" bouffant hairdo and somewhat light-skinned, she was virtually clairvoyant in her perspicacity and amounted to an unsung seer. Notably, even a Bradley-style "inclusion" was opposed by some, for picketing his inauguration was the "American Nazi Party" who hoisted the slogan: "Back to Africa."¹³³

Gibson's analysis also foresaw what materialized at 40th and Central: Once the stomping grounds of the Panthers, by July 1973, 1500 attended the opening of a new mosque, renovated by cadre of the Nation of Islam with selfless dedication. Even during a recent heatwave, the believer known as Felix X, 80 years old, constructed a fence brick by brick, just as his comrades built the organization. He usually worked alone with imported marble from France. After the Elks, who once hosted the cream of Black culture—Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Earl "Fatha" Hines, Billie Holliday, and Josephine Baker—departed from this building, it had become what was termed a "boo-ga-loo joint" and then, in a meaningful transition, a citadel for the Nation.¹³⁴

in protest over forced busing...represented 11 percent of the district's total enrollment." Griffin, also an executive at radio station KGFI, sought to join the state legislature in Sacramento earlier and got a respectable 42% of the vote while the formerly "militant" Bremond, who had run for the State Senate, leapt to become a corporate executive at Cummins Engine: *Sentinel*, 9 March 1972.

130. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 24 May 1973. On repudiation, see also *San Francisco Chronicle*, 21 May 1973. Interestingly, a few years later Mayor Bradley joined chanteuse Lena Horne in demanding that Paul Robeson receive a star on the famed Hollywood sidewalk: *Jet*, 3 August 1976, Reel 2, Black Panther Documents. The "strongest outcry made from Jackie Cooper." See also Vernon Jordan to Elaine Brown, 13 October 1976, Reel 10: Then a mainstream civil rights leader and eventually an investment banker and companion of President Bill Clinton, he found it "inadvisable" to join a committee protesting harassment of the BPP.

131. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 26 May 1972.

132. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 21 June 1973.

133. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 5 July 1973. Communist William Taylor said that the city was run by a "Secret Committee of 25 businessmen" that included A.W. Clausen of the Bank of America and John McCone, former head of the CIA. See *People's World*, 10 February 1973, and 17 February 1973. This was hardly a secret.

134. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 12 July 1973. Cf. *Sentinel*, 2 August 1973: Panthers crash a concert by Ike and Tina Turner at the Oakland Auditorium, leading to a "free-for-all" and "serious injury." The

Hence, the BPP disagreed with Leon Forrest, budding novelist and editor of the *Nation* journal, that they had shown "public disdain" for the Chicago-based formation.¹³⁵ "Only the enemy gains by such a gross error,"¹³⁶ it was said. To that end, Newton conferred with Minister Louis Farrakhan of Temple #7 in Harlem by mid-1972: "Our friendship and our solidarity," said the Oaklander, "as Brothers and Soldiers against a common enemy were more solidified [by our] recent friendship....look forward to the closer relationship."¹³⁷ Newton and his party had maneuvered themselves into a position whereby they had little choice but to ally with "Black Jews," i.e., "Hebrew Israelites," widely perceived as antagonists of their Palestinian comrades.¹³⁸

The rise of the *Nation* was in part a reaction to the decline of the class and socialist project, which the BPP—for a while—projected. This too was perceived by the *Sentinel*, which sharply criticized the United Auto Workers and other "local

concert was sponsored by the party and grossed about \$40,000, and there was a dispute about cash payment and the tardiness of the beginning of the music. He suffered "severe cuts and bruises to the head and body." At the time of the melee Newton was on stage and was blamed for the uproar. Six made it to the hospital, and Turner made it back to his Baldwin Hills home. Cf. *Litigation as BPP sues Turner*, 1 August 1973, Reel 14, Black Panther Documents.

135. *The Black Panther*, 14 April 1973.

136. *The Black Panther*, 24 March 1973.

137. Huey Newton to Minister Farrakhan, 9 June 1972, Reel 17, Black Panther Documents. Cf. Report from Bobby Rush, future Congressman, 9 June 1972, Series 2, Box 41, Newton Foundation: "In the leadership of the faction that is rebelling against the leadership circle, excluding Elijah Muhammad, came into the office seeking the support of the [BPP], specifically 50 comrades to accompany them to the home of Elijah Muhammad in order for them (the Muslims) to see him voice their criticism of the leadership circle.... Hierarchy of the Muslim organization was not channeling funds that they acquired down through the ranks.... leadership was more interested in acquiring private wealth.... they expressed loyalty to [Muhammad].... they wanted to project the struggle within the Muslim organization on the entire Black community." Cf. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 17 January 1972: In recent months there have been eight killings and woundings of seven Nation believers with budgets and the like being at issue. JoNina Abron to Newton, n.d., Reel 45, Black Panther Documents: She wants to do article on split in the Nation of Islam, ca. 1975: "Farrakhan wishes to be in touch with you."

138 See Ahaleak ben Yehuda, Chargé d'Affaires in Jerusalem of "Original Hebrew Israelite Nation...Dimona" to Newton, 7 February 1973, Reel 36, Black Panther Documents: "Our sincere gratitude to you for attending the official opening of our first Spiritual Foreign Embassy in New York City." Newton continued relations with the ideological sparring partner of Mandela's African National Congress, the "Pan Africanist Congress of Azania," whose strength was overestimated routinely by Black Americans possibly because their slogan—"one settler, one bullet"—resonated on these shores. See David Sibeko of PAC to "Brother Revolutionaries in Africa," 7 April 1972, Reel 11, Black Panther Documents: Please aid Newton who "is seeking to establish even closer bonds of solidarity and brotherhood with the African revolutionaries." See also Sibeko to Newton, 19 June 1972, Reel 11: Thank you for your "hospitality....during my visit....cementing everlasting fraternal relations" with BPP. Sibeko, then 40, was murdered in Tanzania as a result of apparent internecine conflict: *New York Times*, 13 June 1979. See also Sibeko and Du Bois on "Black People and the Mid East Conflict," at Oakland's Son of Man Temple, 6118 East 14th Street, ca. 1973, Reel 14, Black Panther Documents: Proceeds to PAC. See *The Black Panther*, 25 March 1972: Four full pages devoted to interview with Sibeko, accompanied by photo with Newton. Cf. *The Black Panther*, 1 April 1972: Samora Machel, founding father of modern Mozambique, pictured with Newton in China.

unions" which "ignore needs of Blacks...there is not one Black union officer in [L.A. County] who can, on his own, authorize the expenditure of a thousand dollars for any project without the approval of a white boss.... until the 1960s it was a rare union that used...its funds for support in the Black community." The *Sentinel* had been favorable to the UAW's Paul Schrader, but not his successor, Jerry Whipple. And Gibson notwithstanding, the paper did not connect this sad state of affairs to the preexisting era, imbued with anticommunism and bashing of left-leaning unions.¹³⁹

This withering trend had ramified consequences. By 1977 the Beverly Hills-Hollywood branch of the NAACP was in an uproar when their counsel, Lynn Hilburn, was planning to assert—said honcho Gloster Current, responsible largely for the purge of the left—that in a "suit against producers of shows which are offensive to Blacks," "not some of the producers are Jewish" but "all are Jewish," as the decline in class consciousness heightened religious and ethno-religious concerns.¹⁴⁰ Arnold Forster, general counsel of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, hardly innocent in the era of purges, rebuked these "anti-Semitic statements" as he demanded "appropriate actions."¹⁴¹

But it was not just unions that were in decline. J.K. Obatala, a professor at Cal State-L.A., asked in August 1972, "whatever happened to the Black Campus Revolution," as he detected a "sharp decline in Black campus politics in Southern California...illustrated by the fate of the Black Student Unions," which had served as a feeder to the BPP. This was "evident not only at Cal State Los Angeles where the chapter has been dissolved through the indifference of its supporters but throughout Southern California." At the campus in Dominguez Hills, the "once militant BSU is gone," while at UCLA the "BSU is intact but has opted for a relatively moderate program that smacks of liberal republicanism." Disillusioned, he concluded "there never was a Black Revolution."¹⁴² More precisely, there was an upsurge of militancy, but as a result of state repression and self-imposed errors, the movement declined.

Gibson's scorching and telling critiques met opposition nonetheless. A "whole lot of folks are bent out of shape," she said wearily about her analysis of Black Capitalism. "[T]hreats have been made," to the point that she "took the phone off the hook." She also took a swipe at the increasingly popular, albeit conservative, Black poet Nikki Giovanni.¹⁴³ This de facto comrade even had the audacity to hail a CP initiative, the formation of the tongue-twisting, National

139. *Los Angeles Times*, 16 August 1973.

140. Current to Ben Hooks, 28 October 1977, Part VI, Box C74, NAACP Papers-LC.

141. Arnold Forster to Ben Hooks, 17 October 1977, Part VI, Box C74, NAACP Papers-LC.

142. *The Black Panther*, 23 August 1972. Cf. BSU Central Committee to Faculty, Staff, Students and Administration, 13 December 1977, Box 1, Black Studies & Chicano Studies Centers Records-C Claremont Colleges. On strike until resignation effectuated from Black Studies Center.

143. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 19 July 1973.

Anti-Imperialist Movement in Solidarity with African Liberation,¹⁴⁴ whose founding convention in Chicago I happened to attend.

Unsurprisingly, the *Sentinel* itself came under attack from its competitor, the *Los Angeles Times*. The feisty underdog fought back vigorously, since this bourgeois organ had a "history of not hiring or promoting Blacks," and suggested that they were instrumental in replacing "Rhythm and Blues" with "Rock and Roll," that led to the demotion of Negro musicians and artists.¹⁴⁵

Besides electoral politics and police terror and its offshoots, there was the nascent phenomenon to be known as "gentrification" as Blacks were being swept out of certain neighborhoods for various reasons. Higher rents were often seen as a primary cause—hardly inaccurate. But another reason was seen when charges were dismissed against defendants Daniel Ellsberg and Anthony Russo, prosecuted for purported purloining of what were known as the "Pentagon Papers." Pivotaly involved in that judgment were Black jurors from Compton, Baldwin Hills and Leimert Park, and gentrification would transform jury pools accordingly.¹⁴⁶

Gentrification was just an iota in another trend, hardly an act of nature executed by the invisible hand of the marketplace. William R. White of Triumph Realtors at 4715 Crenshaw spoke movingly of "harassment of Black inner cities real estate professionals by the Justice Department and FBI," with "wholesale indictments, arrests and financial ruin."¹⁴⁷ Moreover, in a "Black and Brown Report" submitted to the governor in 1972 by liberals, it was charged that the Golden State was becoming the "Mississippi of the West" in that these two racialized groups are 25% of the state, but only 6% of state employees were Black and 4% were Latino, mostly Chicano¹⁴⁸—fueling radicalism. This also fueled opposing trends, according to NAACP staffer Leonard Carter, "competition and polarization" between these two groups.¹⁴⁹

Immigration reform in 1965, eroding the bias toward European migrants while raising the numbers of those from south of the border, also transformed the

144. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 23 August 1973. While rebuking the "paternalism" toward Africa of the Rev. Jesse Jackson, she printed the entire "call" for this confab.

145. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 9 August 1973.

146. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 17 May 1973.

147. Memo from White, 6 September 1978, Carton 33, NAACP Papers-UCB.

148. Report by Mexican American Legal Defense & Education Fund and NAACP West, 24 March 1972, to California governor and legislature, Carton 50, NAACP Papers-UCB. Fortunately, Black and Latino political prisoners often cooperated: see e.g., *The Black Panther*, 5 April 1975, article on Luis Talamantez of the San Quentin 6. His roots were in Mexico and L.A. See *The Black Panther*, 28 February 1976: Hugo Pinell, also part of the SQ6, had roots in Nicaragua and admitted that George Jackson introduced him to "Marx, Lenin, Che...Mao." Jackson, a voracious reader, also studied volumes on minimizing racism in jury trials. See Jackson, *Soledad Brother*, 232.

149. Leonard Carter to Congressman Augustus Hawkins, 8 June 1972, Carton 50, NAACP Papers-UCB.

city. An Afro-Latin group singing in Spanish at a public commemoration met objection in certain precincts because "they were not black enough."¹⁵⁰

Unhelpful was continuing friction within the NAACP internally, particularly within the fundraising machine that was the Beverly Hills-Hollywood branch. By late 1974, Virna Canson of the staff, was in a "state of disbelief," being "willfully misled," proceeding "not...in good faith"; she was "reluctant to concede" but it was unavoidable that a "personal vendetta" was the operative principle.¹⁵¹ A "financial crunch" in the Association meant a "cut back in staff" in a state that was coming to dominate the nation.¹⁵² Then the story broke in the press that the group was fighting "for survival," for, said one officer, Denton Watson, "Many of our members [are] unemployed."¹⁵³ This was the apotheosis of a process begun decades earlier when the group conspired against those to their left, weakening labor and driving them to the brink of extinction, which in turn forced them further to turn with their begging bowl to Big Business, further entrenching regressive forces.

In 1914 there were an estimated 11,589 Negroes in L.A., and 700,000 by 1984. Yet the power of the Association had not grown accordingly but rather, in a sense, had declined, not least because of a basic miscomprehension of the rudiments, including the class question.¹⁵⁴

"Our organization has lost the tremendous momentum," said John Hurst Adams, NAACP leader in the early 1970s, as their constituency was "shifting to groups advocating and using more threatening tactics" (referring to the Panthers). Part of this, he said accurately, was driven by the "corrosive impact of the war in Vietnam."¹⁵⁵

By then Dr. H. Claude Hudson had been an NAACP leader for about a half a century, and acknowledged his weaknesses, at least some: "I do not drive which is a handicap," plus he was "persona [non] grata" with other branch leaders. "Unless something is done and some vigor put into this community," he said mournfully, "you can write off the L.A. branch." He added sarcastically, "I am receiving your reports but as usual they are too long."¹⁵⁶ Infamously, the NAACP had shunned and/or sabotaged the CP and BPP¹⁵⁷ and now was being pressured to

150. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 7 June 1973.

151. Virna Canson to Geraldine Green, 28 October 1974, Carton 28, NAACP Papers-UCB.

152. Virna Canson to Dr. Hudson, 8 March 1976, Carton 33, NAACP Papers-UCB.

153. *San Francisco Examiner*, 9 November 1976, Part VI, Box C9, NAACP Papers-LC.

154. "Diamond Jubilee" of NAACP/Souvenir Booklet, 15-18 March 1984, Part VI, Box C38, NAACP Papers-LC.

155. Memo from Adams, ca. early 1970s, Carton 82, NAACP Papers-UCB.

156. Dr. Hudson to Virna Canson, 26 January 1978, Carton 33, NAACP Papers-UCB.

157. Leonard Carter to Richard Sogg, 25 March 1970, Carton 27, NAACP Papers-UCB: Mother of John Cluchette of Soledad Brothers appeals to NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund but "they would not be able to provide legal assistance."

avoid the Nation of Islam¹⁵⁸ and their allies thought to be in charge of CORE. By 1975 the leader of the all-important Beverly Hills-Hollywood branch was subjected to a "recall" for seeking relations with these pariahs.¹⁵⁹ And it succeeded.¹⁶⁰

Bill Chappell, the deposed leader, defended himself robustly: "I have been in the entertainment business for quite some time and have held such positions as Assistant to the President of the Trans-America owned United Artist Records" and "held key executive positions at CBS Network Television Channel." Thus, he wailed, charges such as these, "especially peculation, "could ruin a mans [sic] integrity, credibility and career." It was just a bald coup orchestrated by Geraldine Green, "the person who drew up the slanderous charges against me," and the doddering Dr. Hudson was among those "that signed the charges against me."¹⁶¹ It was a bare-knuckles brawl. Office secretary Bertha Hayward was aghast at the "constant harassment and threats" she endured, designed to compel her "resignation."¹⁶²

But it was not just the Southland: Due north in Santa Cruz the branch leader Jimmie Griffin had served for 30 years, but finally was accorded an "immediate suspension" for "doing little or nothing about the plight of Blacks in this community where Blacks are continually oppressed."¹⁶³

This upheaval was occurring at an inopportune moment, for intensified pressure from various circles was leading to Hollywood seeking to produce more films with Black themes and characters. Part of it was because of the success—financial and otherwise—of Van Peebles's *Sweet Sweetback*, praised lavishly by Newton. Leonard Carter of the Association said this was a "black exploitation" genre—a reflection of the uplifting of the lumpen and decline of the organized working class because of the Red Scare—featuring Black gangsters, gun molls and prostitutes. But Carter was pessimistic about the ability of his employer to intervene fruitfully since the Beverly Hills-Hollywood branch, chartered in 1962,

158. Attorney Garfield Steward of San Francisco to Leonard Carter, 30 January 1970, Carton 27, NAACP Papers-UCB: Mother of Soledad Brother John Cluchette notes that "another boy there," speaking of the prison where her son was held, "has turned Moslem," the ongoing trend.

159. *Hollywood Reporter*, 21 February 1975.

160. Press Release, 16 July 1975, Part VI, Box C74, NAACP Papers-LC. Cf. undated complaint re: this case, Part VI, Box C74: This leader was also accused—quite typically of NAACP leadership—of "misappropriation of branch funds...\$12,000" all told as a result of his role in the lucrative "Image Awards" bringing stars under one roof to receive homage and awards. There was "mishandling of funds" and "spreading gossip" as causes of action brought by the "chief prosecutor" Geraldine Green—who supplanted his influence with her own. See Report, ca. 1967, Part VI, Box C38: The branch first picketed the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences—and their "Oscars"—in 1965 as "several...went to jail that evening," and by 4 February 1967 the first Image Awards was held.

161. Bill Chappell to Virna Canson, 16 April 1975, Part VI, Box C9, NAACP Papers-LC. In same box see all Current to Walter Christmas, 15 July 1975: National Board ousts Chappell.

162. Memo from Bertha Hayward, 6 June 1975, Part VI, Box C9, NAACP Papers-LC.

163. Wilma Campbell to Ben Hooks, 15 April 1978, Carton 28, NAACP Papers-UCB.

was wracked by "confusion and turmoil...division and chaos...loud shouting and tantrums," par for the course in other words. "Bitter controversy" was normative, he said, although the "motion picture and large segments of the television industry are far too important to our people and to our organization nationally to be [en]trusted in a local branch," a bureaucratic reordering of the flow chart that was bound to mean even more controversy as this cash cow was moved 3000 miles eastward to Manhattan headquarters.¹⁶⁴ This one branch in West L.A., said redbaiter-in-chief Current, "through the years has sent more Freedom Fund money" to Manhattan than the rest of L.A. as a whole.¹⁶⁵

The sly Current advised, "in view of the special nature of the...branch," that "diplomacy" be deployed, that is, "commit as little to writing as possible" during this "difficult situation."¹⁶⁶

Junius Griffin of this lucrative Beverly Hills branch, sited at fashionable 6363 Sunset Boulevard, lamented the "growing cancer of Blacks in 'blaxploitation'" movies, spewing "filth, violence, and cultural lies" amounting to "cultural genocide" as "pimps, dope pushers, gangsters" were uplifted. Without irony, this NAACP leader cited the contrasting contributions of Robeson which his group had helped to sideline.¹⁶⁷

The BPP also crusaded against this cinematic trend, though they did not engage in how their heroizing of the lumpen might have contributed to it. "We demand," it was said in 1972, that "the movie industry stop using our lives to make money," listing as foci of outrage *Shaft*, *Cotton Comes to Harlem*, *Putney Swope*, etc. (they could have found more illustrative exemplars of this trend; however, they added pungently, "from Stepin 'Fetchit to *Superfly* is a great leap to nowhere"). They were miffed that "'revolutionaries' come across as stumbling fools with no program," and their immediate focus was on *The Mack*, then being filmed in Oakland, their backyard. Producers were paying film "extras" only \$10

164. Leonard Carter to Gloster Current, 26 October 1972, Carton 77, NAACP Papers-UCB. Cf. Vima Canson to Gloster Current, 16 August 1974, Part VI, Box C74, NAACP Papers-LC: The Beverly Hills-Hollywood branch then had \$15,000 in its coffers. Cf. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 26 April 1973: "All offices of the Beverly Hills-Hollywood branch...dissolved...\$30,000 in debt." See also Current to Carter, 26 October 1972, Part IV, Box C3, NAACP Papers-LC: "Very bitter controversy" in this branch; past leader, Eddie Smith—that rara avis, a Negro stuntman in Hollywood—was at the center of this "period of division and chaos" with, yes, "loud shouting and bitter tantrums."

165. Current to Leonard Carter, 22 January 1973, Part IV, Box C3, NAACP Papers-LC.

166. Current to Vima Canson, 6 November 1974, Part VI, Box C9, NAACP Papers-LC. Current knew of diplomacy. Current to Dr. Hudson, 8 April 1969, Part VI, Box C77: "You know how fond I am of you."

167. Memo from Junius Griffin, 9 August 1972, Part IV, Box C3, NAACP Papers-LC. See *The Black Panther*, 14 April 1973: "To Paul Robeson we celebrate your life...we draw strength from your life. We stand tall, as you stood, proud and beautiful in our Blackness." *The Black Panther*, 31 January 1976: "In memoriam": Robeson, a "shining example during his 77 years of life."

daily, and naturally, the party demanded that they receive five times as much.¹⁶⁸ Perhaps not accidentally, as the film was exhibited in theaters, this classic example of "blaxploitation" advertised in the party organ.¹⁶⁹ Then Seale appeared alongside the movie's star, Max Julien, at a "Unity Conference,"¹⁷⁰ as he endorsed the Panther for mayor of Oakland.¹⁷¹ Other advertisements began appearing in the Panther organ boosting the pimp-friendly flick *Willie Dynamite*, appearing beside another ad for one of this dastardly profession's favorite watering holes, *The Lamp Post*—where Newton was reputed to circulate—at 2273 Telegraph in Oakland.¹⁷²

Geraldine Green, an attorney in private practice and thus a archetype of the group's petit bourgeois leadership, rather huffily informed regional staff that she was "amazed at your lack of knowledge" and susceptibility to "gross misinformation"; as for "receivership" or a hostile takeover of the Beverly Hills-Hollywood branch where she was influential, she replied with a curt no thank you.¹⁷³

However, her comrade Collette Wood, president of the branch that Green served, could be accused of a "lack of knowledge" in that she was unaware of the whimsical writer Dorothy Parker, who had left her estate to the NAACP: Wood thought she was a "Freedom Rider killed in the South during the Sixties."¹⁷⁴

Even armed struggle took on diverse meanings as the Panthers began to fade. Shortly before the opening of the mosque and Bradley's election—two landmarks—the activist known as Max Stanford (to be known as Muhammad Ahmad) was detained in San Diego and slated for extradition to the East Coast. He had served as "Field Marshal" of the Revolutionary Action Movement, which also pursued armed struggle, mostly in the northeast U.S. and, according to press reports, he had ties to New York and Alabama Panthers. He had been "underground for the past four years," said a journalist.¹⁷⁵

However, the disintegration of organized forms of resistance did not bring an end to inchoate and individualized forms. For just as Bradley was unpacking boxes in his new City Hall office, down the freeway in Oceanside, Gary Raphael, a 24-year-old Black man—a prime demographic for the Panthers—instead

168. *The Black Panther*, 7 October 1972. Cf. *The Black Panther*, 20 January 1973: Seale endorses the film *Black Girl*: "Don't miss it!"

169. *The Black Panther*, 14 April 1973. See also Newton to Allen White, 292 La Cienega-Beverly Hills, 24 April 1973, Reel 15, Black Panther Documents: "Thank you...regarding the proceedings from the first showing of 'The Mack' in Oakland."

170. *The Black Panther*, 5 May 1973.

171. *The Black Panther*, 12 May 1973. See also undated, Seale for Mayor and Brown for City Council, Reel 2, Black Panther Documents: "Jimmie James a brother from L.A. who owns four nightclubs and is Freda Payne[s] boyfriend, said he would talk to her about doing something for us."

172. *The Black Panther*, 19 October 1974.

173. Geraldine Green to Virna Canson, 1 November 1974, Part VI, Box C74, NAACP Papers-LC: Her office was at 515 S. Flower Street.

174. Collette Wood to Gloster Current, 24 May 1976, Part VI, Box C74, NAACP Papers-LC.

175. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 9 November 1972.

"vowed" to "get whites," grabbed a sawed-off shotgun, killed a hostage—then was slain.¹⁷⁶

SCLC—Dr. King's group--was falling apart, including in L.A.¹⁷⁷ An institution which arose in the wake of the Watts Revolt of 1965 was the Mafundi Institute, a political and cultural lodestar, but as the page was turning with Bradley's ascension, their leader—Dr. J. Alfred Cannon, formerly of UCLA—was accused of "acting like a dictator," and this entity too was in upheaval.¹⁷⁸

176. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 19 July 1973.

177. *Los Angeles Free Press*, 3 August 1973, and 17 August 1973.

178. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 9 August 1973. Dr. Cannon died of a heart attack in Zimbabwe: see *Los Angeles Times*, 11 March 1988.

Chapter 19

Black Guerrilla Family, 1971-2002

In October 1975 the rock and roll/pop culture journal of record, *Rolling Stone*, carried an advertisement featuring the handiwork of Eldridge Cleaver. No, it was not a bible of guerrilla warfare nor a guide to effective armed struggle, items previously high on his agenda. The ad promoted a style of pants that he thought would take the nation by storm. "Eldridge de Paris," as he billed himself, revived the codpiece, stitched into pants which centuries previous accentuated men's genitals tightly and conspicuously. They were "revolutionary hot pants," it was said: "they're bad, they're mad, they're up front (but never out of sight)" and "for men only," i.e., "real men." Cleaver's descriptor announced that "the pants that men wear now will be looked upon as girls' pants after my models are sold," he assured potential consumers. Appealing to a patriotism he once scorned, he highlighted the "red-and-white-striped appurtenance for the U.S. Bicentennial" upcoming within months. "Up your revolution!" And, yes, "heavy on the starch." "Eldridge de Paris" was his own model, appearing in profile with—of course—an elongated "appurtenance."¹

This latest transformation of Cleaver—from Muslim to quasi-Marxist to sexy pants designer—was disorienting to those who had aligned with him. Denise Oliver of Washington, D.C. (also known by the surname Oliver-Velez), had served with both the Panthers and the Young Lords. She told Cleaver to ignore New York Panther Dhoruba bin-Wahad since "he's very bitter," albeit a "lot of the confusion about you seems to stem from the 'Eldridge Cleaver the pants designer image' that you seem to have picked up." She requested that he "please clarify," but what could he say? She was now shaping programming at the Pacifica Radio outlet in the capital and remained grateful to him: "I learned a lot from you," she said, which was also true for others, and perhaps more from the "Algeria/Congo experience." She then told him something that his own devolution exemplified: "This country has changed very much since you left."² How true. The Black Left

¹ Ad, *Rolling Stone*, 9 October 1975, Ron Wilkins Papers. This ad can also be found at Reel 57, Black Panther Documents.

² Denise Oliver to Cleaver, 1975, Box 3, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

had been bludgeoned via police terror, dirty tricks and criminal trials, which also malformed the consciousness and ideology of too many, Cleaver not least.

After the writer Alice Walker denounced a tendency within the Panther involving male supremacy and homophobia,³ Cleaver's erstwhile comrade—Donald Cox, still in exile—was “enraged!” Yes, Cleaver “became a ‘political chameleon and opportunist,’” as suggested but, he stressed, “no one considered Eldridge a psychotic opportunist” (a textbook example of damning with faint praise—but praise nonetheless). “He was incompetent militarily but Eldridge Cleaver put his life on the line too” and indeed, “what distinguished Huey Newton and the Black Panther Party is the fact that Panthers were ready to kill!” This shifted the correlation of forces domestically to the benefit of the Black community (and the detriment of Panthers in graves and prison cells). And what of Walker's “obsession for the word ‘punk,’” deployed by the party homophobically? “What difference does it make,” said Cox curiously, “if one has a limp wrist? Especially if one knows how to shoot straight!”—alluding inferentially to the ancient Sacred Band of Thebes. “Jimmy Baldwin and Jean Genet were comrades!”⁴

Still, Walker's assailment was just one of many revelations that emerged about Cleaver's peccadillos, large and small. He was counterfeiting currency while in Cuba, it was reported. As noted, he confessed to a cop ambush in Oakland in 1968; he was a “born hustler” and “a con”—a report retained by someone who knew him well: lawyer Beverly Axelrod.⁵

For Cleaver and his spouse this was a precipitous fall. With Newton and Seale behind bars for long stretches, beginning in 1967,⁶ in some ways he was effectively the most telegenic and dominating leader of the party. And with his similarly advantaged spouse adding a force multiplier, not enjoyed by other leaders, this high-flown status was ratified.⁷ This was especially the case since Newton conceded, “I am not very good at talking to large groups; nor do I enjoy it. Abstract and theoretical ideas interest me most but they lack the rhetorical fire

3. *New York Times*, 5 May 1993.

4. Donald Cox on Alice Walker, 5 May 1993, Box 7, Beverly Axelrod Papers. See also Louis Crompton, *Homosexuality and Civilization*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006.

5. *East Bay Express*, 8 May 1998, Box 1, Beverly Axelrod Papers.

6. *The Black Panther*, 3 July 1976. Newton: Seale was a “good organizer, who got things moving...when Bobby left in August 1967, we were not to be together on [the] streets again until June 1971.”

7. Interview, 9 November 1977, Carton 9, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

to hold audiences.”⁸ Thus, a campus lecture tour he embarked upon, he characterized as the “worst experience I have had in my life. I lost fifty pounds.”⁹

He “criticized us not to help us,” charged his former comrades, speaking of the formerly exiled Angeleno, “but to destroy us,” especially “during the period of time from January 1969 to the Summer of 1971, when the [party] was under constant harassment.”¹⁰ Then again, as Newton admitted when he was exiled in Cuba from 1974-1977,¹¹ “it was extremely difficult for me to maintain any regular ongoing contact with the [BPP],”¹² which created an opening even before then for the spread of Cleaver’s influence from his safe haven—and Telex—in Algiers. Thus, said the party in a “deceitful path of low grade opportunism,” he “viciously attacked world Jewry while living in Algeria,” complicating the Panthers’ path at home.¹³ Cleaver was blamed for the notorious slaying in Oakland, a real turning point, in April 1968: He “shoved 17 year old Bobby Hutton in front of him,” as a kind of human shield. And as for Samuel Napier, whose killing led to an infamous trial of comrades back East, he was liquidated on “Cleaver’s orders.”¹⁴ Newton recalled that when he was trial in the late 1960s, it was Cleaver who published a leaflet that tended to justify the paramount leader killing cops. “My family was very upset,” said Newton, “they protested strongly to Cleaver.”¹⁵ Elaine Brown charged further that Cleaver “secretly provided...testimony to an executive session of [Senator James] Eastland’s Senate Internal Security Subcommittee,” referring to him as the “Black community’s Patty Hearst,”¹⁶ i.e., the heiress who

8. *The Black Panther*, 24 July 1976. See Newton, “The Historical Origins of Existentialism and the Common Denominators of Existential Philosophy,” (Focus on Kierkegaard), n.d., Reel 1, Black Panther Documents. *The Black Panther*, 1 April 1978: Newton speaking at Boston College on Marx and Kant. He characterized the BPP as a Marxist-Leninist party...following the dialectical methods...we are not Historical Materialists.” *The Black Panther*, 15 April 1978: Newton restates importance of the lumpen and alleges that Lenin was “not a historical materialist.”

9. *The Black Panther*, 18 February 1976.

10. *The Black Panther*, 23 November 1972. It is striking how so many of the leading activists—Newton, Angela Davis, Karenga, Stokely Carmichael (a philosophy major at Howard)—were philosophers. Cf. Newton passport application, ca. 1977, Reel 30, Black Panther Documents: “Occupation...Community Organizer.”

11. B. Kwaku Duren to “Comrade Niurka” in Cuba, 6 April 1977, Box 6, B. Kwaku Duren Papers: Writing from 169 Loma Drive in L.A., he just became “Coordinator” of revived Southland Panthers and was planning for the return of Newton, who had been “in Cuba since August 1974 in...exile.”

12. Memo from Newton, ca. 1978, Reel 40, Black Panther Documents.

13. *The Black Panther*, 31 January 1976. As noted below, the prominent role played by leading Zionists in aiding Cleaver, once he returned home, raises multiple lines of inquiry.

14. *The Black Panther*, 17 April 1976. *New York Times*, 14 April 1972. See also BPP Press Release, 21 April 1976, Carton 13, Cleaver Papers-UCB. See *The Black Panther*, 9 October 1976, Newton: “A former member of the Oakland Police Department, a Black man, recently confirmed to us in private that Little Bobby was murdered outright. He had witnessed the murder that night.”

15. *The Black Panther*, 13 November 1976.

16. *The Black Panther*, 1 May 1976. See Cleaver to Dymally, 5 August 1977, Dymally Papers: He accused politicians, e.g., Congressman Dellums, of “playing footsy with Elaine Brown...at the same time she’s trying to put banana peels up under my feet.”

it seemed had turned on her class, then turned again back to them—wholly unprincipled in other words. They were once close but now Brown had become one of his vitriolic critics. She recalled how in 1970 they spent months together with a delegation in Pyongyang, China, Hanoi, the Soviet Union, and Algiers, where, typically unhinged, Cleaver “personally threatened my life” and how he insisted that back home “there needed to be more killing, more arbitrary violence,” all this “while he safely sat in Algeria.” Exasperatedly, “for three months we argued.”¹⁷ We opposed spontaneous rebellions,” said Newton, alluding to “recent riots in Newark and Detroit,”¹⁸ but Cleaver’s ultra-leftism—as in Oakland 1968, it was thought—often led the party into mortal ambushes.

Their vociferous attacks on Cleaver contributed to an infamous episode in Vancouver, Canada, when the former exile received a “pie in the face” since he was deemed to be a “Front Man” for the CIA. It was an “Oreo Cream pie,” and “his puffed cheeks” were left “swollen and bruised,” though magnanimously he declined to press charges.¹⁹

Then Cleaver was accused of “spilling his guts” to federal prosecutors and had “given them information about the trip to [North] Korea and... Vietnam,” and he was “said to have been in contact with primary people within the Black Liberation Army until the day he returned to this country,” helping to roll them up.²⁰ If the latter were accurate, this was devastating since, as an Oakland analyst put it, Cleaver was the “standard bearer” for the BLA.²¹ Axelrod agreed that he was “cooperating with the FBI” and “against the Left in general” since “he’d gotten used to the gratification of applause and adulation.”²²

He had prepared the ground in 1975 by providing an exclusive interview to CBS newsman Mike Wallace, from Paris where he had fled after he was effectively ousted from Algiers.²³ This was anticipated by a strange experience

17. *The Black Panther*, 10 July 1976.

18. *The Black Panther*, 24 July 1976.

19. *The Black Panther*, 21 May 1977.

20. Memo to Charles Garry, 21 May 1977, Reel 41, Black Panther Documents. Cf. *Atlanta Journal*, 10 February 1972, Carton 12, Cleaver Papers-UCB: On the BLA, the militant now known as Assata Shakur is listed as a “bookkeeper” for the BPP. As I write, she is exiled in Cuba after escaping from the mainland. Fellow exile (in Tanzania) and former Panther Pete O’Neal asserts that the U.S. authorities offered him emoluments to turn against her. Magnarella, *Black Panther in Exile*, 232.

21. *East Bay Express*, 8 May 1998, Box 1, Beverly Axelrod Papers.

22. Undated remarks, Box 13, Beverly Axelrod Papers. See also Newton, “War Against the Panthers,” 42, 46: Manipulation of “high strung Cleaver... FBI field offices supplied Cleaver with a steady stream of messages containing erroneous information” and this “fostered... dissension.” Cf. FBI Report, 28 February 1971, Reel 17, Black Panther Documents: The Bureau portrayed a sharp conflict between Cleaver and Hilliard. Newton had offered the former party leadership, but the exile declined. Cleaver denounced Prof. Davis since, says Newton, she “would not go to bed” with him. Newton and Cleaver disagree over Timothy Leary. Cf. William Patterson to “Dear Comrades,” 28 January 1971, Box 65, CPUSA Records-NYU. Chairman Henry Winston assails Cleaver after the latter berated Prof. Davis which was “calculated... to hamper the international support” for her.

23. *The Black Panther*, 2 June 1975.

before departing North Africa, where he saw a full moon and images of Che, then Mao—then Jesus, to whom he was to swear allegiance.²⁴

The couple were also interviewed jointly on 22 March 1975 from Paris via phone on a Bay Area television network and, once more, he lacerated the socialist camp, especially Cuba, where he had lived for months before turning his fire on Algeria, where he lived for years.²⁵

Contrastingly, Newton and his comrades showed that they were more serious than Cleaver and those who followed him. Newton had the good sense not to berate socialist Cuba—doing so made no sense if one were serious about armed struggle, as the “Cleaver-ites” purported to be. The party organ at a sensitive moment saluted—as they should have—the dispatching of Cuban troops to Angola to foil an apartheid intervention backed by U.S. imperialism in the newly independent nation. (They did so despite China’s shaky role during this conflict.²⁶) As a public service, they listed the names of 60 CIA agents in Africa (alongside yet another David Du Bois panegyric affixed to China).²⁷

Of course, Newton was then exiled in Cuba and had the good diplomatic sense not to offend his hosts (unlike Cleaver). Still, Elaine Brown, just after the Angola intervention, reminded him in his new home in Santa Clara, Cuba, that it had been “over a year since your departure” and it had been a “difficult time.” Still, the comrades “remained under your leadership, committed to the people of Cuba and to the Revolution.” Yet a “move to return here,” meaning Oakland, “would be unwise.” So, the leadership was requesting that “you (along with your family) seek residence elsewhere,” the “most feasible location to be the United Republic of Tanzania” in southeast Africa.²⁸ (Recall the analogy drawn in the Introduction between post-Jim Crow African-Americans and Africans in post-independence Zanzibar.)

It was in 1977 that Fernandez Rohina, an editor of the *Tanzania Daily News*, toured the party’s printing operation and urged “closer cooperation between Black

24. Magnarella, *Black Panther in Exile*, 119.

25. Report from FBI, 2 April 1975 [on 22 March interview], Reel 31, Black Panther Documents.

26. *The Black Panther*, 7 February 1976. Cf. *The Black Panther*, 13 January 1979: “U.S. China ties threaten Southeast Asia.” The focus is on the overthrow of the genocidal Pol Pot regime in Cambodia. The front-page featured Newton shaking hands with Chou of China while Deng Xiaoping, preeminent leader, was termed an “unrepentant capitalist roader.” Cf. *The Black Panther*, 23 April 1977: “Demonstrators disrupt U.S.-South Africa Davis Cup match” in tony Newport Beach: 500 picket while 10 rush the court. Of course, a number of so-called Black Power advocates wound up on the same side of the pivotal Angola conflict as apartheid and the CIA: See Home, *White Supremacy Confronted*, passim.

27. *The Black Panther*, 24 April 1976.

28. Brown to Newton, February 1976, Series I, Box 41, Newton Foundation. See also Newton to Mission of “Lybia [Libya]” at United Nations, 18 July 1986, Reel 61, Black Panther Documents: “Information on how one travels to Lybia...hoping to talk with President Khadafi [sic].”

Americans and Africa,"²⁹ with a Newton residence there being an appropriate culmination.³⁰ While in China earlier, Newton had conferred with Tanzania's envoy. Even then, China had offered him asylum,³¹ in the context of a two-hour meeting with Premier Chou and another six-hour meeting with "Comrade Chiang Ch'ing, the wife" of Mao Zedong, later berated and purged by her comrades. He was then accompanied by Elaine Brown and Robert Bay.³² (In part, the tie to Dr. es Salaam was an aspect of the BPP's connection to the Pan Africanist Congress of "Azania" [South Africa], which received the party paper regularly in this oceanside city.)³³

By then, Elaine Brown was playing a preeminent leadership role, but by November 1977 she turned the page, resigning and returning to songwriting while assuring Newton,³⁴ "I love you."³⁵ Quickly, Dr. Jay Friedman in Beverly Hills

29. *The Black Panther*, 11 June 1977. Undated memo from Newton in Cuba, Reel 12, Black Panther Documents: Leadership of party says he should exile in Tanzania, "which I shall do" notwithstanding his "warmth and friendship" for the "Cuban Revolution [which] inspired us." On same reel, see letter from Newton where he requests documents from Tanzania—along with "Stevie Wonder albums" and "JET magazine." On same reel, see Attorney Fred Hiestand to Tanzania embassy in U.S., 17 March 1976: Wants to meet with envoy, Salim Salim [sic].

30. "Chairperson" Elaine Brown to Newton, February 1976, Reel 45, Black Panther Documents: "Take up permanent residence in...Tanzania."

31. *The Black Panther*, 18 February 1978: "I didn't feel at home when I visited China.... Chinese culture is too different." Cf. *The Black Panther*, 28 January 1978: While in China, says Newton, "I achieved a psychological liberation I had never experienced before," leaving a "profound effect on me," not least since "the Chinese were interested in the party's analysis."

32. *The Black Panther*, 17 December 1977, also 11 December 1978, Newton: "Little...to find fault with" in China.

33. *The Black Panther*, 24 September 1977: See letter from PAC. Cf. *The Black Panther*, 3 December 1977: See full-page interview with Thambi Mhlambiso of the PAC's ideological foe, the African National Congress.

34. Resignation Letter, 16 November 1977, Series 2, Box 41, Newton Foundation. *The Black Panther*, 26 November 1977, also 17 December 1977: Seale resigns in 1974, it is said here; despite her being a leader even then, it was reported that afterwards Brown, a "relative unknown from within our ranks," replaces him. *The Black Panther*, 18 February 1978, Newton: "I'm a very sad person," especially when Seale exited the ranks.

35. Brown to Newton, no date, Series 2, Box 41, Newton Foundation. See "Commemorate" November 1990, published by BPP, Reel 21, Black Panther Documents, Elaine Brown on Newton, who "had been my friend, leader and lover." Brown to Newton, ca. 1977, "I'm sorry—which is sorry—for which you may hate me forever—but it seemed too much of a man's world for me. After 10 years of everything—that this could stop me (us)—I love you anyway." "Gwen" to Brown, undated, Reel 45: "In light of the U.S./Cuban phone rates, we must write to each other more often.... I hope you miss me at least half as much as I miss being with you." Bert Schneider to Newton, 25 January 1979, Reel 45: "Am in a very low space emotionally...not just emotionally strong enough to deal with you...renew our love." See also Municipal Court of California, County of Alameda-Oakland-Piedmont Judicial District, #64624A and #65919, 6 August 1977, "People of State of California vs. Huey Newton," Declaration of Elaine Brown, member of BPP since 1968 and "currently the Chairperson." Notes "surveillance of telephone or other oral communications" of her. "Strange sounds when I use the telephone." Reel 2, Black Panther Documents.

chose to "terminate" his "monthly contributions" to the Southland party due to her resignation and the "cult of personality" surrounding Newton.³⁶

Near this time, David Horowitz—then a leftist, soon to be an ultra-rightist—was driving Newton to his residence in the Oakland hills, bought for him, he said, by Schneider.³⁷ Newton had developed a film treatment in braille to pass on to Stevie Wonder and Mick Jagger. Brown, said Horowitz, "had been living in a kind of semi-retirement with a wealthy French industrialist in Paris" (he was writing in 1993, and Brown only resigned in 1977, whereas the crime she was accused of—the killing of Betty Van Patten, a BPP staffer—occurred in late 1974 with her body recovered the following year). She was a "political gangster," he maintained. But the wider point was that despite their stress on "survival programs," social welfare initiatives of the kind derided by Charlene Mitchell, Horowitz claimed that at an Oakland site he became aware of the existence of "1000 weapons, including machine guns, grenade launchers and anti-tank guns"³⁸—an arsenal that seemed more likely to be held by Cleaver.³⁹

Despite the rumors swirling about his role upon returning home, Cleaver steadfastly denied the more troubling stories. "I am not an FBI agent, CIA agent or connected to the local police." (Cleaver had spent enough time with litigators to recognize the distinction between "agents" and "informants.") He denounced "greasy snakes like [Congressman] Ron Dellums and his cowardly friends." He reminded Seale, who had his own differences with the BPP leadership after departing the ranks, "that Huey *ordered* me to split to Cuba. David Hilliard, Melvin Newton and Charles Garry brought me that order." [emphasis-original] He then distinguished his then status from others who had followed him: "We still have brothers and sisters in prison and on the run, squashed and scattered all over."⁴⁰

³⁶ Dr. Jay Friedman to BPP, 13 December 1977, Series 2, Box 41, Newton Foundation. Cf. Larson and McGee, *Neutralized*, 180: Brown's relationship with Jay Kennedy viewed suspiciously by certain comrades.

³⁷ *The Black Panther*, 18 February 1978: The FBI opened "large bank accounts, withdraw funds and send check stubs around to my supporters, to show I was living high on the hog." See 1981 Tax Return of Newton and partner: Income \$21,000 to \$34,000; Address 7261 Sayre Drive in Oakland, Reel 30, Black Panther Documents.

³⁸ *San Francisco Examiner*, 3 May 1993.

³⁹ See "Commemorator," November 1990, published by BPP, Reel 21, Black Panther Documents: Brown blamed Horowitz for the rise of Cleaver, presumably because *Ramparts* magazine once housed both.

⁴⁰ Cleaver to Seale, 14 July 1982, Box 3, Cleaver Papers-UCB. See Mervyn Dymally to Cleaver, 1 August 1977, Dymally Papers: "You were quoted... 'Black politicians like Mervyn Dymally and Willie Brown did not lift a finger to help me' after my return." What of "my involvement with... your wife... your San Diego attorney... Bayard Rustin... Max Kampelman" of Washington, the latter being a staunch Cold Warrior and hardline Zionist. In the same collection, see Cleaver to Dymally, 5 August 1977: He retreats and says he had "aimed a couple of darts at the Black Politicians in Alameda," referring again to Congressman Dellums; as for the L.A. pol, "you rank at the top in my book." See

The party refused to accept his explanations. After Ms. Cleaver blamed the FBI for splitting her spouse from the BPP, the party organ erupted in dispute: "The fact of the matter is," it was said fumingly, "that Eldridge Cleaver himself was—and perhaps still is—an active agent of the COINTELPRO" and a "Judas Agent" besides with a "madman's intent."⁴¹ (According to the Panthers, Palestinian radio denounced Cleaver as an "FBI agent," though it is unclear if this was from firsthand experience or it was fed to them by the Oakland leadership.⁴²) For good measure the BPP reprinted a 1971 letter from the sainted George Jackson attacking Cleaver and recalling his brutal assaults on Prof. Davis, the Peace and Freedom Party, Charles Garry and Fidel Castro—among others.⁴³ Elaine Brown asserted that Cleaver sought to "live vicariously off the contradictions among Black people," a response to yet another attack by the former exile on Cuba and Castro. Newton went a step further and blamed Cleaver for the decision to engage in armed struggle since the Central Committee was "mesmerized" by him; "they voted me down,"⁴⁴ said the paramount leader, an infrequent occurrence at most.

Probably because he returned home in the midst of the Cold War with stinging rebukes of socialist countries, Cleaver was able to garner wide support in centrist, conservative and liberal circles,⁴⁵ which spared him a lengthy stint in prison and promised retribution from Panthers there. This support was reflected in his being able to snag as an attorney, George Higgins, who was also a popular—and well-heeled—novelist. He was depicted as a "rather jittery man who talks with a raspy, nasal accent," but he "had made enough money out of his five novels," including cinematic portrayals and lawyering, that he traveled with a secretary and routinely wore a white leather trench coat and sported shades. Still, somehow, he thought he could profit from this legal matter, at least downstream through fodder for fiction or enhancing name recognition, speaker fees and talk show appearances: "If ever there were... a six-figure case," he offered, "this is it."⁴⁶

also Cyrilly Abels to Charles Garry, 29 January 1969, Carton 28, Cleaver Papers-UCB: FBI "called on three times" re: Cleaver's whereabouts.

41. *The Black Panther*, 17 April 1976.

42. *The Black Panther*, 10 April 1976.

43. *The Black Panther*, 24 April 1976.

44. *The Black Panther*, 22 May 1976. See also *New York Times*, 17 July 1977: "Violence not needed to bring socialism," says Newton.

45. *New York Times*, 18 February 1976: There was a Murderers' Row of anticommunists backing Cleaver, including Bayard Rustin, Albert Shanker of the American Federation of Teachers, attorney Joseph Rauh of Washington, D.C., and founder of Americans for Democratic Action, Professor John Roche, columnist Nat Hentoff.

46. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 12 February 1976. See Higgins to Jack Greenberg, 22 April 1976, Part V, Box 76, NAACP Papers-LC: "Bogus letters" sent to Cleaver's spouse via COINTELPRO, "falsely representing that Eldridge was engaging in sexual relations with 13 and 14 year old girls" which "stimulated differences between Eldridge" and his comrades to the point that Seale "threatened Kathleen with danger [so] that she was dissuaded from traveling to the United States to negotiate between them."

Possibly. Cleaver's apostasy, his embrace of Christianity and imperialism alike after a storied career of radicalism, allowed him to attract top-flight assistance: During his brief stint in Paris, his attorney was the affluent Samuel Pizar, stepfather of a future U.S. Secretary of State⁴⁷—Antony Blinken—and a preeminent Zionist in his own right.

Higgins certainly dramatized this case. Contacting the influential Bayard Rustin, he asserted that "COINTELPRO" or FBI counter-intelligence "could lead to a defense of shattering impact" via the discovery process available to criminal defendants. But the impecunious Cleaver "carried a gun because he was the target of his own government"⁴⁸—though others suspected that his shrewd client was actually cooperating with them. Howard Moore, fresh from the Davis victory, thought he carried a pistol for another reason—those who had neither forgiven nor forgotten his malignant role in the BPP. "[I]f he were returned to prison," for example, "he would...be executed on some pretext."⁴⁹

By his own admission—and in words retained by his nemesis, Newton—Cleaver admitted that like iron filings to a magnet, those who flocked to him often ended badly. There was Tricia Baldock, for example: "she made about three trips between the U.S. and Algeria" on his behalf—then "was killed in a car accident in Canada," plunging "over a cliff." "It felt like murder to me," he said grimly, part of the "spooky shit" that seemed to follow him like a black cloud. Although he was warned by the Algerians that the U.S. was capable of monitoring all communications from the legation, he and other comrades operated as if this were not the case.⁵⁰

His return to the U.S. also meant that he had to confront Beverly Axelrod, whose ministrations had sprung him from prison and set him on his serpentine course. Their confrontations then caused him to reflect on their tortured engagement.⁵¹ She was demanding what she thought was her fair share of the

47. *San Francisco Sun-Reporter*, 20 December 1975.

48. Higgins to Rustin, 26 March 1976, Part V, Box 76, NAACP Papers-LC.

49. Moore to Nathaniel Jones, 19 January 1973, Part V, Box 76, NAACP Papers-LC.

50. Remarks of Cleaver, 27 May 1976, Series 2, Box 41, Newton Foundation. This document can also be found at Reel 53, Black Panther Documents. See also Remarks, 17 March 1994, Box 7, Beverly Axelrod Papers: "American Secret Services" shot William Seidler in Philadelphia, a comrade of the executed couple Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, in order to inflame tension between Newton and Cleaver then in Algiers.

51. Cleaver Remarks, 27 May 1976, Series 2, Box 41, Newton Foundation. Franklin Williams, her former paramour, "was ambassador to Ghana when Nkrumah was overthrown" and was in Modesto in the 1950s as an NAACP "functionary, led the witch hunt against Communists in the NAACP during which Beverly Axelrod was purged. This man sent an emissary to Algeria with a proposal using money as a bait, to co-opt" himself and the comrades; the idea was "our hosting an International Conference of Black Writers, Intellectuals and personalities" as flypaper to snare them: "he is well known as a pig." Somehow he managed the conclusion that Williams was an example of "how the Black Establishment rode to political power on the backs of the Black Movement which they were busily stabbing." Cleaver could qualify as an expert witness in "stabbing" the "Black Movement." See also *The Black Panther*, 1 April 1978: CIA spies on Algiers legation.

profits gained from *Soul on Ice*, a best seller with foreign translations.⁵² This embittered litigation led to charged mud-slinging.⁵³ The stakes were high in that Kathleen Cleaver alleged in 1976 that their “only regular source of income is \$250 a month” from the estate of her father and about \$4000 in speaking fees, meaning, she said, “my poverty.”⁵⁴ Axelrod’s attorney, Doris Walker, was told that her client was in the “worst possible situation” in that the “jury really believed that Beverly was a jilted, spiteful, suicidal possibly psychotic woman”—in other words, Cleaver’s courtroom strategy worked. Her team mulled calling Kathleen Cleaver, who “may be quite an impressive witness, beautiful and articulate (the contrast with Beverly’s physical appearance really cuts both ways),” but the prospect left them flummoxed.⁵⁵ And she had her own complaints about Axelrod.⁵⁶

52. See Portuguese contract, ca. 1970, Box 7, Cleaver Papers-UCB. Cyrilly Abels to Cleaver, 30 March 1971, Carton 28. Possible Spanish, Scandinavian, Greek editions. Abels, formerly with *Mademoiselle* magazine and agent for the spouse of novelist Richard Wright: Deposition of Abels, 20 September 1974, Carton 28.

53. See “Axelrod v. Mc Graw Hill,” ca. 1974, Roger Ruffin, Cleaver’s attorney, charged—stereotypically—that her emotional blackmail meant that he agreed to an undeserved share of the profits, i.e., she “threatened to commit suicide on [his] doorstep and to leave a suicide note.” This proposed—and alleged—suicide threat occurred on 12 February 1968 near Cleaver’s then residence on Castro Street in San Francisco, while Axelrod’s side said that he had sent guns from California to Nashville and that he supplied the gun to Newton that led to the shooting of an Oakland cop. Cleaver said that his spouse could corroborate his assertions, along with Communists Roscoe and Girmie Procter. Axelrod allegedly threatened to insure that he returned to prison, which contributed to his lengthy exile. He charged that by speaking to “My Parole Officer and to her ‘political buddies’ in Sacramento,” it was he who was coerced to assign her undue earnings from the book. At the trial in December 1974, her attorney Doris Walker—fresh from the Angela Davis trial—objected to the line of questioning of her client—“wholesale rummaging through her personal life.” Axelrod was once held in contempt when defending Chicano hero Tijerina, was married twice and she visited him “more than 50” times before his December 1966 prison release, which she largely engineered. “I spent an enormous amount of time, almost full time...on Mr. Cleaver’s problems” and, yes, she “certainly had very strong feelings” about him: “We grew to love one another,” but within months of his walking out of prison, their relationship had ended, and shortly thereafter he married Kathleen Neal. But cf. Transcript, 20 September 1979, Carton 29, Cleaver Papers-UCB: Axelrod says that she and Cleaver were involved roughly until November 1967. Cf. FBI Report, 28 March 1968, Carton 27: Cleaver and Neal wed 27 December 1967 at Baptist Church in L.A., 4630 S. Broadway. See *Oakland Tribune*, 1 January 1978: At their marital ceremony, intelligent voices assembled allegedly sought to dissuade them from solidifying their tie legally, seemingly aimed at Kathleen Neal.

54. Affidavit of Ms. Cleaver, 31 July 1976, Carton 30, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

55. Mark Soler to Doris Walker, 25 April 1978, Box 12, Beverly Axelrod Papers. See also Cyrilly Abels to the Cleavers, 19 March 1972, Carton 28, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

56. Kathleen Cleaver to Fred Rosenberg, 4 December 1973, Carton 28, Cleaver Papers-UCB. “Real mess” involving Axelrod. In January 1968, cops in San Francisco were “kicking down the door” of their apartment with “weapons drawn.” Her spouse called Axelrod for aid and she “refused.” The latter’s purported “traumatic and emotionally chaotic situation” not only caused her exile—including to Italy—but also damaged the newlyweds. Yes, by the fall of 1969, he received “ten times the advance” for a new book, but this had little to do with Axelrod. Axelrod, “twice divorced and once jilted,” was “using the suit in a vindictive and vengeful manner...she still has not recovered from her loss of Eldridge.” The \$16,000 Axelrod supposedly had received was more than enough, she said.

Ms. Cleaver had been transformed into a kind of nostalgia act that survives in Las Vegas, long after the pinnacle of notoriety. *Rolling Stone*, which carried ads for her spouse's "hot pants" for men, pictured her in 1976—as if Algiers 1969 had returned—with a long gun and shades.⁵⁷

Yet by 1978 she and her spouse were residing in fashionable Los Altos south of San Francisco—in a "luxurious" abode, said an observer.⁵⁸ This was an upgrade since, as she indicated, the "position of a political exile is precarious to say the least."⁵⁹ Apparently, he had become accustomed to the finer things in life; Newton said for the longest time he had been "living like a king in Algeria," for "in addition to the [party] embassy...[he] also has a nine bedroom home with servants."⁶⁰ She continued their joint campaign to discredit Algiers, with her assertion that she "saw Black slaves in Algeria," evidently—per Newton—not at their mansion. Thus, she maintained, "You really need God," this as her husband was reported to have been "calling in a peremptory tone for a cup of coffee."⁶¹

The breakup with Cleaver, said Axelrod, was the "great tragedy of my life"—but at least she did not have to fetch coffee for a boor and ogre. By 1968 she was in New Mexico colluding with Tijerina and the activist and writer Betita Martinez. She started a newspaper.⁶² She also made it to Wounded Knee as an attorney for militant Indigenes, spent time in Grenada, the small Caribbean island invaded by the U.S. in 1983 during the height of Cold War excess. She rented a home for \$20 monthly, beat off the aggressive entreaties and overtures of then Prime Minister Eric Gairy, a bizarre thinker besides, then returned there in 1982 after his overthrow. By 1984 she was sited in Pacifica, Calif., a lovely spot on the ocean halfway between San Francisco and Half Moon Bay.⁶³ A four-pack-a-day smoker, Axelrod—born in 1924—expired in 2002.⁶⁴ Her comrades and friends knew well that the authorities "hated Beverly Axelrod passionately because she had gotten [Cleaver] out of the penitentiary, the fact that she was white only made her more

57. *Rolling Stone*, 9 September 1976, Reel 24, Black Panther Documents.

58. *Oakland Tribune*, 24 July 1977.

59. Kathleen Cleaver to Fred Rosenberg, 4 December 1973, Carton 28, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

60. FBI Report, 28 February 1971, Reel 17, Black Panther Documents.

61. *Oakland Tribune*, 1 January 1978.

62. Undated remarks, Box 1, Beverly Axelrod Papers.

63. Interview, May 1993, Box 13, Beverly Axelrod Papers.

64. Obituary, ca. 22 June 2002, Box 13, and Death Certificate, 10 June 2002, Box 3, Beverly Axelrod Papers: "Congestive heart failure." Newton chain smoked Kool menthol cigarettes, a major cause of death for Black men: *Los Angeles Times*, 25 August 1977. Cf. Keith Wailoo, *Pushing Cool: Big Tobacco, Racial Marketing and the Untold Story of the Menthol Cigarette*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021.

culpable" in their demented minds.⁶⁵ It was a life well lived,⁶⁶ in sum, pockmarked by a disastrous detour with the caddish Cleaver.

Cleaver had prefigured his twisty ideological turn—from radical revolutionary to the sartorial variety—as early as 1972 when he took to the pages of the *Black Scholar* and declared boldly that "Marxism in the form of socialist states and Communist parties has entered the camp of the enemy."⁶⁷ As so often happens, a "more revolutionary than thou" stance—especially within the context of a settler state like the U.S. with a potent right-wing—curbs space to find allies and, almost inexorably, leads to difficult compromises—such as that endured by Cleaver when he cut a deal with the authorities to return to the land of his birth.

Thus, those close to Newton were unsparing in scrutinizing Cleaver's return home. "He negatively criticized Cuba, he criticized China, he criticized...Congo Brazzaville, he criticized Algeria," and very well may have left in his wake a ideological shambles that likely affected a less than flattering image of Black American "revolutionaries" for years to come.⁶⁸ Party spokesman David Du Bois was explicit: "He was expelled in 1971...he's not going to become a member again under any circumstances."⁶⁹ Even Jewish-American trickster Abbie Hoffman was contemptuous of Cleaver: "He knows more about the inside of Donald Duck's brain," he quipped, "than he does about Cuba."⁷⁰

Du Bois was closing a door that it was likely the Cleavers would not choose to enter. Instead, Cleaver was bonding with Christian conservatives, whose political strength was to grow even more in coming decades. His spouse was aboard, gushing to the Rev. Robert Schuller, the popular televangelist in Garden Grove, Calif.: "What a wonderful welcome" the couple received; her spouse's "testimony will reach and inspire many people who have not yet found the Lord."⁷¹ Schuller should not have gotten overly enchanted since her spouse actually converted to Mormonism. Cleon Skousen, formerly of the FBI, then a professor at Brigham Young University, assured him in words unimaginable a few years earlier that J. Edgar Hoover "would be proud of you."⁷² Understandably, "There is no class war, no class struggle," said the repentant Cleaver, who went

65. *The Black Panther*, 11 September 1976.

66. *The Black Panther*, 10 July 1976: Newton credits Axelrod with devising the characterization of cops as porcine; they tried "dog" but that didn't work. "[T]his was a form of psychological warfare," said the literate leader, citing James Joyce.

67. Cleaver, "On Lumpen Ideology," *Black Scholar*, 4 (No. 3, November-December 1972): 2-10, 3. Carton 2, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

68. "Justice for Eldridge Cleaver," ca. 1975, Reel 14, Black Panther Documents. See *The Black Panther*, 18 February 1976, Newton: "After Robert F. Williams, Stokely Carmichael and Eldridge Cleaver all denounced Cuba, the government was somewhat apprehensive about giving exposure to the so-called North American revolutionaries."

69. *New York Times*, 19 November 1975.

70. *Newsweek*, 21 June 1976.

71. Kathleen Cleaver to the Reverend Schuller, 24 November 1976, Carton 9, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

72. Gifford, *Revolution or Death*, 265.

con to blast the BPP, Fidel Castro and Cuba, Congressman Ronald Dellums and Lionel Wilson, soon-to-be mayor of Oakland.⁷³ Pat Boone, the sweater-clad crooner and Hollywood celebrity, told "Dear Eldridge" that "Jesus has made us one...we're stuck with each other."⁷⁴

Maybe. It depended really on whether Cleaver deemed U.S. imperialism to be hegemonic, which is what he was wagering on then. Interviewed in 1975, he mused about guerrilla plans to "set this thing up" in Cuba but the island comrades were "slow"; then "Bunchy" Carter, his co-planner, was killed. Then he was shaken by the Mao/Nixon entente and now maintained that the "U.S. should be second to none militarily,"⁷⁵ which would underscore his latest alliance with conservative Christians. By 1980 he received probation, and in a final flourish denounced critics of the police, an armed force of the state that he once derided as porcine.⁷⁶

In the height of irony, Cleaver—born in 1935—expired in 1998 on May Day, the workers' holiday especially celebrated by Communists, as if he were seeking to confound them by exiting on their holiest of days. After he died, he continued to confound the authorities too, as the LAPD stole his body and kept it, mysteriously, for three days, then accorded him a respectful motorcycle escort to Mountain View Cemetery in Altadena, adjacent to Pasadena.⁷⁷ About two decades before this death, the Panthers in the Southland were revived, after being brutalized by harsh persecution, including the frameup of Ji Jaga.⁷⁸ They were revived in January 1977 at a gala event featuring BPP Chair Elaine Brown and Ericka Huggins, films and free groceries.⁷⁹

* * *

The party came blazing out of the chutes. Their range was from as far west as Culver City, north from Pasadena, south from Hawthorne and east from Huntington Park. A notable initiative was "Seniors Against a Fearful

73. *East Bay Voice*, July 1976, Reel 57, Black Panther Documents. Cf. Congressman Dellums to Admissions Office-UCSC, 4 December 1972, Reel 47: "I have known Mr. Newton for more than ten years...countless conversations with him...one of the outstanding intellectuals in the country."

74. Pat Boone, 30 December 1976, Carton 5, Cleaver Papers-UCB.

75. *Rolling Stone*, 11 September 1975, Box 13, Beverly Axelrod Papers.

76. *Oakland Tribune*, 14 October 1980.

77. Gifford, *Revolution or Death*, 286, 288.

78. See *The Black Panther*, 11 March 1978: Agent gives FBI "layout" of Southland chapter office just prior to December 1969 siege. See also "Committee for Justice...Black Panther Party Harassment Research, 1967-1976," Report #1, 8 September 1977, Reel 10, Black Panther Documents. Same reel, see Lillian Hellman to Elaine Brown, 24 November 1976: Please change your name, already in use. See also undated clipping, Reel 4: "Panthers Reborn."

79. *The Black Panther*, 22 January 1977.

Environment" (SAFE), seeking to restrain preying upon the elderly. There were films, slide shows and speakers every Wednesday at their office, 5022 South Central,⁸⁰ and a "liberation school" for those from 8-14.⁸¹

It was explained that the authorities "infiltrate[d]" and disrupted their earlier version by dint of "verbal harassment to open physical confrontation." There had been relentless "surveillance" as comrades were "followed through the streets." Even at this late date the "party's views have not fared well because they have been suppressed by an armed force."⁸² As of early 1977 they had less than \$400 in the bank though they expended less than \$90 a week.⁸³ Danny Bakewell, the entrepreneurial activist then of the Brotherhood Crusade, a philanthropy, chose not to fund them.⁸⁴

One of their earliest efforts involved homage to martyrs Huggins and Carter, slain in January 1969, and continuing the trend, handing out hundreds of bags of free groceries. A startling documentary film on the martyred Chicago Panthers Fred Hampton and Mark Clark, murdered in their beds in the wee hours of the morning, was exhibited as the comrades staked out territory not only on campus (UCLA) but in the wider Black community too, at the auditorium of Golden State Mutual at Western and Adams.⁸⁵ (Evidently, Hampton's comrade Mark Clark was slain while sitting in a chair.)

There was an old tension, however. At one meeting, minutes reflected that "Bob [Duren] smoked a cigarette because of anger." Part of the discussion then was a source of unrest generally: "Party structure" included the point that—as with Communists and national liberation movements—"directives *must* be carried

80. *The Black Panther*, 26 March 1977.

81. *The Black Panther*, 9 April 1977.

82. Press Release, ca. 1978, Box 6, B. Kwaku Duren Papers. Cf. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 2 December 1977: FBI had "anti-left allies" at *San Francisco Examiner* and "now defunct *Express Times*," along with seven informants at San Francisco State, three at Merritt College, three at Stanford, two at San Jose State University, and one at Cal State Hayward. They also "successfully infiltrated" the Du Bois Clubs. See also *The Black Panther*, 3 June 1978: FBI spied on BSU at UCSB and paid informants with complicity of the administration. The Selective Service—or conscription—was used to harass activists, while military intelligence also spied. *The Black Panther*, 5 November 1977: Duren "harassed" by LAPD. *The Black Panther*, 3 December 1977: Since the "reopening" of the BPP, the LAPD "has continually attempted to harass and intimidate" the comrades. *The Black Panther*, 4 February 1978: "Two Black men killed in LAPD custody," Alvin Whitehead and Ferdinand Be2, followed by "angry protest." There had been 37 fatal shootings in 1977 plus at least 15 "unexplained jail deaths." *The Black Panther*, 25 February-9 March 1980: 19-year-old Cedric Steward slain by L.A. county sheriff's deputy. See Felker-Kantor, *Policing Los Angeles*, 111: In 1978, 137 children were sent to adult court from L.A., 30% were Chicano/Latinx, 66% were Black. By 1980 the county's population was 67.1% defined as "white," 18.3% Chicano/Latinx, and 10.8% Black.

83. Budget, January 1977, Box 6, B. Kwaku Duren Papers.

84. Danny Bakewell to B.K. Duren, 16 August 1977, Box 6, B. Kwaku Duren Papers.

85. Statement, 17 January 1977, Box 6, B. Kwaku Duren Papers. See *The Black Panther*, 7 May 1977: 1500 UCLA students backed by BPP rally to protest cutbacks.

through" after through discussion.⁸⁶ [emphasis-original] Martial arts was a course taught twice weekly. In addition to free food, there were free legal services too—Duren was an attorney (we collaborated in the National Conference of Black Lawyers)—and newspaper distribution. Issues promoted included affirmative action, cop terror, Southern Africa and women's concerns.⁸⁷

By mid-1977, 800 were reported as amassing for a party rally in L.A. Horace Tapscott's Pan Afrikan Arkestra and the Watts Prophets (premature rappers) were a draw, as Duren served as M.C. There was a "food and shoes giveaway." Nonetheless, there were, said a reporter, "suspected agents provocateurs" sent to "disrupt the rally."⁸⁸

As ever, there were glitches in newspaper distribution. They were "coming so late" and that did "create a problem." Another problem was yet another trial involving the "Servant"—Newton—whose adversities both drained resources and shaped party agendas.⁸⁹ The "membership development plan" included classes in party history and, naturally, "Dialectical and Historical Materialism."⁹⁰

Consonant with this global philosophy, they sought to coordinate with likeminded forces across national borders. The struggle of Eritrea presented a difficulty for them "because of Soviet/Cuban involvement" and the close relationship with the latter two with Ethiopia from which this province was seceding.⁹¹ "Criticism" and "Self criticism" were also part of their ideological armor, a gust of fresh air.⁹²

But this was L.A. so, led by Duren, they were a frequent presence at the Parker Center (LADP headquarters), allied with the talented activist Michael Zinzun of the Coalition Against Police Abuse and the brilliant attorney Linda

86. Discussion on "Party Structure," ca. 1977, Box 6, B. Kwaku Duren Papers.

87. See Minutes, 9 February, 18 April, and 19 June 1977, Box 6, B. Kwaku Duren Papers. See *The Black Panther*, 28 January 1978: L.A. chapter celebrates first anniversary by distributing free food, and 500 are attracted. *The Black Panther*, 25 March 1979: 400 attend Southland chapter's "Annual Winter Festival" with "distribution of over 300 bags of groceries and over 100 toys." See *The Black Panther*, 26 February 1977: "Rights of Women at L.A. County Jail violated...Sybil Brand Institute."

88. *The Black Panther*, 4 June 1977, and 3 September 1977: Marvin Gaye and Melba Moore in concert with funds in part going to BPP. *The Black Panther*, 15 October 1977: "New Consumer Survival Service" of BPP.

89. Minutes, 1 August 1978, Box 6, B. Kwaku Duren Papers. See *The Black Panther*, 12-25 May 1980: "Black Panther newspaper sabotaged...negligence by the Oakland Post Office."

90. Minutes, undated, Box 6, B. Kwaku Duren Papers. Felker-Kantor, *Policing Los Angeles*, 124, 148: The Coalition Against Police Abuse (CAPA), which had an interlocking directorate with the BPP, studied "Marxist Theory." Sensing an opening, undercover agents in CAPA sought to push them to becoming a "paramilitary organization."

91. Eritrean Liberation Program, 1 May 1978, Box 6, B. Kwaku Duren Papers. Cf. *The Black Panther*, 11 March 1978, Newton: Hails the so-called Euro-Communism trend since these Communist parties chose to "no longer follow the dictates of the Soviets." Eventually in Italy this trend contributed to the collapse of what had been the most influential Communist Party in the capitalist world.

92. Minutes 10 May 1978, Box 6, B. Kwaku Duren Papers.

Ferguson⁹³—with whom I collaborated fruitfully during these tempestuous times. There were protests at the city jail, which served to spur the revival of the party chapter: There had been five deaths there by mid-1976.⁹⁴ There were protests over the 1979 slaying of a Black woman, Eula Love, at the hands of the LAPD in a dispute over payment of a utility bill.⁹⁵

Duren bolted into public consciousness when he led struggles against the state Highway Patrol and their depredations in Long Beach.⁹⁶ However, he was not a good fit for the NAACP, with leaders there complaining that “this branch, like a number of others, fell into the hands of a radical element.”⁹⁷ He was a much better fit for the BPP.

During the heyday of ji Jaga,⁹⁸ L.A. Panthers diverged from Oakland and leaned toward New York City on the complex matter of armed struggle. By the time of Duren’s ascension, the comrades in the Southland were much more comfortable in allying with Communists than the Oaklanders, where a bitter aftertaste remained from the trial of Angela Davis.⁹⁹ Perhaps because they knew

93. *The Black Panther*, 29 May 1976. See also *The Black Panther*, 20 December 1975: “FBI Takes Credit for 1969 Murder of BPP Member in San Diego.” See edition of 17 January 1976: “FBI Admits Gloating Over Murders of San Diego BPP Members.” *Los Angeles Times*, 31 January 1977: FBI “took credit for a ‘high degree of unrest’” in Southeast San Diego after sparking Karenga-BPP rift. Cf. edition of 3 January 1976: “Fallen comrade...Frank ‘Franko’ Diggs...assassinated December 30, 1968...the eighth and last comrade” in Southland BPP “to be killed that year”; he was 40.

94. *The Black Panther*, 24 July 1976.

95. *The Black Panther*, 13 May 1979. For more on this case, see e.g., Tom Hayden, Chair of Campaign for Economic Democracy, and Jane Fonda, to Arthur Fleming of U.S. Civil Rights Commission, 5 June 1979, Reel 38, Black Panther Documents. Cf. *The Black Panther*, 11 March 1978, Newton: “I’m impressed by the work of Hayden.”

96. *The Black Panther*, 14 October 1975.

97. Lillie V. Grigsby to Gloster Current, 21 October 1975, Part VI, Box C75, NAACP Papers-LC.

98. See Stuart Hanlon on ji Jaga: *Los Angeles Times*, 13 March 1997.

99. Still, Oakland headquarters, even in its latter stages, continued to heroize CP heroes. See *The Black Panther*, 28 January 1978: Excerpts from Robeson’s autobiography. Edition of 4 February 1978: Full page on Du Bois and another sizeable segment on Robeson. *The Black Panther*, 12 February 1977: Robeson “one of the greatest artists in U.S. history was blacklisted due to his opposition to racism and capitalism.” Edition of 19 February 1977: Robeson “to receive special tribute.” *The Black Panther*, 23 January 1978: More than a full page accorded Robeson after his death. Yet another full-page tribute to Robeson in *The Black Panther*, 4 December 1976. See also *The Black Panther*, 16 April 1977: “A tribute to Mrs. Shirley Graham Du Bois.” *The Black Panther*, 17 December 1977: Full page on revolutionary poetry of Langston Hughes. Moreover, Oakland continued to benefit from the legacy of the Southland which had a stronger and more numerous left historically. See Clarence Darroa Foundation, 2240 Mandeville Canyon Road, L.A., to Michael Kennedy, 7 May 1979, Reel 54, Black Panther Documents: Benefit for Newton with Henry Fonda serving as honorary chair and Stanley Sheinbaum (married to Warner Bros. heiress) as chair. See also Robert Browne of 21st Century Foundation, 112 West 120th St., Harlem, to Bert Schneider, 13 June 1974, Reel 29: “Because your generosity helped to make this fledgling foundation possible.” On the same reels, ca. 1972, see List of Finance Contacts from L.A. for BPP: Includes Bill Cosby, Robert Altman, Alan Arkin, Clarence Avant, Marlon Brando, Jim Brown, James Coburn, Wally Cox, Robert Culp, Buddy Collette, Angie Dickinson, Kirk Douglas, Billy Eckstine, Dennis Hopper, Donald Kalish, Ben Margolis, Mary Tyler Moore, Lamont MacLemore, Mike Nichols, Brock Peters, Beah Richards, Raymond St. Jacques.

her well from her days at UCSD and UCLA—and not just as a global celebrity—they did not shrink from allying with the group she helped to found, the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression. Not least because of Davis's ability to attract funding through speaking fees and the like,¹⁰⁰ her group was able to bring resources to the table, including an office at 11712½ Main St.,¹⁰¹ making them an attractive partner. The Alliance's style of work, shaped by Davis and the CCP, strayed away from the Cleaver legacy—no more shunning those deemed insufficiently revolutionary, and instead stressing broad, well, alliances. By 1980 they were planning a major event with Davis, Aretha Franklin (recall that she had vowed to provide bail money for her), and United Church of Christ cleric Ben Chavis. The issue was police abuse, a major issue still in L.A. Duren was to work side-by-side with Charlene Mitchell, who was to decamp to town for three weeks so that the goals—6000 for a mass rally and \$60,000 gross to subsidize future events—could be reached.¹⁰² Then Assemblywoman and future Congressperson Maxine Waters was contacted.¹⁰³ Rose Chernin, a survivor of the Red Scare and then a leader of the Committee to Defend the Bill of Rights, was a leader of this campaign, along with Duren and Ferguson.¹⁰⁴

The problem was that some in this broader coalition were uncomfortable with the "Servant," Huey Newton. Fred Rinaldo, formerly "blacklisted" as a screenwriter, noted that "we have tenuous relations with the Black churches in our areas. They do not accept our leadership." But his wider point was that "we agree that [Newton] has no place as a speaker at the rally... we have doubts that he will come."¹⁰⁵ But this was not easy for Duren to accept. He was headed to Oakland to confer with both Newton and Davis, signifying his role as a bridge builder.¹⁰⁶

Duren had made it clear—writing to "Comrade Huey" from his then office at 50022 South Central—that he wanted him and future San Francisco mayor, Willie Brown—to come to L.A. Newton was told further that "in L.A. there are virtually

Susan St. James, Haskell Wexler. Another list includes Robert Vaughn, Sal Mineo, Rod Serling, Bill Dana, Carl Reiner, Jane Fonda, Danny Kaye, Lloyd Bridges, Robert Ryan, Paul Newman, Joanne Woodward, Ben Gazzara, Lauren Bacall, Rafer Johnson, Richie Havens, Joan Baez, Judy Collins, Eddie Albert, Beau Bridges, Peter Fonda, Candace Berger, Greg Morris, Dana Andrews, Dustin Hoffman, Theodore Bikel.

1000. See Vicki Mercado to "Dear Tony," ca. 1975, Box 1268, Random House Records: Davis "made \$20,000 a year." In Box 1517 of this collection, see her contract for her book *Women, Race and Class*.

1001. Minutes, 9 December 1980, Box 16, B. Kwaku Duren Papers.

1002. Minutes, ca. 1980, Box 16, B. Kwaku Duren Papers.

1003. Duren to Waters, ca. 1980, Box 16, B. Kwaku Duren Papers.

1004. Joint Letter from Duren, Ferguson and Chernin, 18 November 1980, Box 16, B. Kwaku Duren Papers. See also *The Black Panther*, 25 December 1976: Conference on LAPD, including Coalition Against Police Abuse; Duren, Ericka Huggins.

1005. Fred Rinaldo to Charlene Mitchell, ca. 1980, Box 16, B. Kwaku Duren Papers. See "Read the Servant's Letter to the U.C. Regents," 25 September 1977, Box 6.

1006. Duren to Malvice Jefferson of NAARPR in New York, 9 September 1980, Box 16., B. Kwaku Duren Papers.

no signs of Party programs or even the paper on a consistent basis."¹⁰⁷ There were good news and bad news: the party organ could be found in about two dozen sites in L.A.—but mostly liquor stores, ideal for reaching the lumpen, perhaps, but not necessarily otherwise. This may have caused the L.A. comrades to produce their own publication, *The Intercommunal Spark*, a mashup of both *Iskra*, a legacy of the Russian Revolution, and Jonathan Jackson's high school publication, alongside "Intercommunalism," Newton's contribution to revolutionary thought.¹⁰⁸ However, the "central body" in Oakland demanded that they suspend publication—which occurred.¹⁰⁹

But by then the Oakland headquarters was coming apart at the seams. After more than a decade of publication, the newspaper was shifting to a newsletter. The "content will be the same," said executive Jo Nina Abron optimistically, though she knew that it was "hard to sell the newsletter on the street," part of the attraction of newspapers which facilitated face-to-face interaction and proselytizing.¹¹⁰ Then the other shoe dropped when Abron told Duren that the BPP "may have to close party headquarters as a means of saving money" as "these are difficult times for us."¹¹¹ This was preceded by her informing readers that the party was undergoing a "period of financial stress."¹¹²

Duren was undeterred. As an attorney, he had ties to the National Conference of Black Lawyers, born in 1968 at the apex of Black Liberation, and to the National Lawyers Guild, founded in 1937 at the summit of Communist influence. His local BPP chapter had access to streams of financing that non-sectarianism facilitated.¹¹³ The chapter was also buoyed by the ongoing national campaign to free J. Edgar Hoover, expressed dramatically in 1980 when Edwin Drummond scaled the

107. Duren and "Ollie" to Newton, 17 May 1978, Reel 4, Black Panther Documents.

108. See *The Intercommunal Spark*, 1 (No. 4, August-September 1977), Reel 4, Black Panther Documents, and John Narayan, "Huey P. Newton's Intercommunalism: An Unacknowledged Theory of Empire," *Theory, Culture and Society*, 36 (No. 3, May 2019): 57-85, on the party's and Newton's evolution toward intercommunalism. *The Black Panther*, 22 April 1978: "In 1966 we called our party a Black Nationalist party...we thought that nationhood was the answer," then "Revolutionary Nationalism, that is nationalism plus socialism." They decided this was "impractical and even contradictory" and then "Internationalists" because we saw the need to "crush the ruling circle and...unite with peoples of the world"—then intercommunalism, which seemed to see the U.S. as an empire that unites in opposition Black folk and Vietnamese and others.

109. Duren to "Central Body," ca. 1978, Reel 4, Black Panther Documents.

110. Jo Nina Abron to Duren, 10 November 1980, Box 6, B. Kwaku Duren Papers. See also *The Black Panther*, 1 April and May 1978: Paper switching to biweekly and from 28 to 16 pages, while the editions of 25 March, 8 April, 29 April, and 13 May not have been published at all. *The Black Panther*, 1 December 1978: "Help *The Black Panther* resume weekly publication." Abron to Newton, 30 January 1979, Reel 45, Black Panther Documents: "Current issue of the newspaper has not been printed because we lack \$182 to pay our printer." *Oakland Tribune*, 18 April 1978: "Last issue sold on the street here was dated March 18," though the BPP organ continued until about 1980.

111. Abron to Duren, 21 October 1980, Box 6, B. Kwaku Duren Papers.

112. *The Black Panther*, 20 May 1978.

113. See "Money Damages in Police Misconduct Cases", 1983, Box 18, B. Kwaku Duren Papers.

Statue of Liberty and unfurled a banner reading, "Liberty was framed—Free Geronimo Pratt."¹¹⁴ Along with Zinzun and the Coalition Against Police Abuse¹¹⁵ they prevailed in a civil lawsuit against groups—including the John Birch Society and Western Goals, portrayed as a "right wing non profit"—involved in destabilizing Black organizations,¹¹⁶ a story that penetrated the sacrosanct pages of the *Los Angeles Times*.¹¹⁷ Duren solidified his and the Panthers' role further when years later he ran for Congress on the Peace & Freedom Party ticket.¹¹⁸ Yet even his effectiveness could not overcome the drawdown of the national office.

A nail hammered into the party's coffin occurred in 1977 when Newton's publisher told him brusquely that "due to the book's low rate of sale, we have decided not to reprint it," speaking of his book *To Die for the People*.¹¹⁹ The party was able to hang on for a few more years, but its fate was the inexorable result of ferocious repression, which in turn induced tactical and strategic errors on the part of the comrades.

By October 1980 Abron in Oakland was frustrated. "We must assess what we can do in the future as an organization with twenty-seven members. Most party members are between 30 to 40 years old, with one-third being over 35," and "many of us are beginning to think about our future...we are overworked...we are older...morale among party members is low. Fifteen of twenty-seven party members work at the [party] school...the school is a large program and because it is presently our only source of income, it [is] necessary for over half the party to work there," referring to the Community Learning Center. Elegiacally, she concluded, accurately, that "there has never been an organization like us in the

1114. Olsen, *Last Man Standing*, 269. Cf. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 16 September 1988: Newton contrite about lack of support for Ji Jaga in original trial, who he thought was seeking to kill him and take control of the party. See also In the Matter of the Application of National Black Human Rights Coalition for Leave to File Brief Amicus Curiae on Pratt case, ca. 1979. Lawyers and supporters include Duren, Lew Myers of Chicago, Le Grand Clegg of Compton, Karenga, Farrakhan, Republic of New Afrika, the Rev. James Lawson of SCLC-West. NBHRC cited at 8601 S. Broadway in L.A., Vertical File-Geronimo Pratt, Freedom Archives-Berkeley. At the same site and file, see also Ji Jaga rally in L.A., 12 October 1980: Speakers include Minister Farrakhan, Myers and Victor Goode of the National Conference of Black Lawyers. Cf. Rally at Brooklyn College for Prof. Davis, ca. 7 January 1971, Box 65, CPUSA Records-NYU: Minister Farrakhan speaks.

1115. *The Black Panther*, 12 March 1977: Petition against police terror circulated by Coalition Against Police Abuse. *The Black Panther*, 16 April 1977: "CAPA leads protest against L.A. cop killing...200 [assemble]"; Duren is chair of CAPA too. *The Black Panther*, 3 September 1977: 27 murdered by LAPD thus far. *The Black Panther*, 14 October 1975: Zinzun appears with David Du Bois on the "Emerging Police State" at USC forum.

1116. Duren Statement, 22 February 1984, Box 31, B. Kwaku Duren Papers.

1117. *Los Angeles Times*, 2 September 1983.

1118. Document from Duren Campaign Committee, 37th Congressional District, office in Compton at 4420 N. Poinsettia, 27 May 1992, Box 16, B. Kwaku Duren Papers.

1119. Random House to Newton, 2 September 1977, Reel 4, Black Panther Documents.

history of this country.”¹²⁰ But, alas, this was insufficient to save the organization from the ravages of imperialism.

In late August 1989 the press reported that Tyrone Robinson, a crack cocaine dealer with ties to the Black Guerrilla Family perceived earlier as a force for armed struggle, confessed to the murder of Newton.¹²¹ In a fashion that strangely exemplified the heightened role for the lumpen once promulgated by the BPP, they were said to control a good deal of the drug trade in Oakland (of course, the control of the raw material often rested elsewhere) and, at the same time, they were said to have taken a “blood oath” to the hallowed memory of George Jackson. They marked the anniversary of his death, “Black August...with fasting and meditation” and were unhappy with Newton, feeling that he had withheld support for Jackson’s prison escape, dooming it to failure. Fortunately, the consensus was that it was unlikely that the BGF leadership was involved in this murder.¹²²

120. Abron to Newton, 1 October 1980, Reel 63, Black Panther Documents.

121. See *Los Angeles Times*, 22 August 1989: Reported is his release from prison in 1970 as a result of the jury receiving improper deliberation instructions from the judge and his flight to Cuba in 1974 “after being accused of killing a 17 year old prostitute and pistol-whipping his tailor,” returning in 1977 with trials ending in hung juries. A year later he was “found guilty of being an ex-felon in possession of a handgun. He was found guilty of the same charge in 1979 as well and finally was sentenced in 1981.” Like Cleaver and Karenga, his father too had been intermittently a Christian pastor. See also *New York Times*, 23 August 1989: “In 1987 he served nine months in San Quentin...on a handgun possession charge...in March he pleaded no contest to misappropriating \$15,000 in public funds earmarked for a community school the party ran...after being granted parole on the weapons conviction, he returned to prison twice on parole violations.”

122. *San Francisco Examiner*, 26 August 1989. On the BGF, see also the shooting of radical attorney Fay Stender roughly a decade before Newton’s demise. See e.g., Jo Nina Abron to “Deadline,” 23 August 1979, Reel 30, Black Panther Documents: “You spend so much time linking the [BGF] to Stender’s “attempted murder,” speaking of this “close personal friend” of Newton. Fay Stender to Rose Chemin, L.A. Committee to Defend the Bill of Rights, 27 February 1969, Reel 41, on 1500-word article on Newton. Clipping, 17 August 1979, Reel 20: After the shooting of Stender, Charles Garry purportedly said that he knew “his life is in danger” from the BGF who were “not political people but nuts”; ji Jaga denies he is their leader while George Jackson, in whose name they supposedly worked, was said to be the founder of the BGF with a membership then of about 200, according to this source. See Lester Jackson to John Thorne, 22 March 1971, Box 101, Thorne Papers: On Stender: “I don’t particularly care for her.” Michael McCarthy to “Dear Brother,” 16 December 1970, Reel 45, Black Panther Documents: “My problem with the Soledad Bros., is of course Fay. Her negative attitude...heard that Fay told George that I was an agent.” Same reel, Stender to Newton, 23 October 1970: “Blame me” for p. 218 of Jackson book, i.e., a “private letter to Angela...not intended for publication...what troubles me the most is that you have the wrong impression, in part...George, you don’t know him and you never [seem] to...get the more complex picture as I know it.” See also Stender to Newton, 7 August 1974, Reel 41: Jerry Rubin is aiding Cleaver’s return to U.S.: is it okay to help despite his and BPP’s conflict with this exile? See also “Threat Notes 1989”/File on Black Guerrilla Family, Box 11, Angela Davis Papers-Harvard. Because of the authorities’ penetration of various “radical” formations, suspicion lingered about the actual nature of Newton’s demise. See e.g., Donald Freed to Newton, et al., 25 April 1978, Reel 41, Black Panther Documents: “Yet another secret police agency exists on a national level...created specifically for the Black Panther Party...constituted in late 1966 or early 1967...still called the Inter Departmental Intelligence Unit...corresponds point

Whatever the case, Newton left a lasting legacy that continues to resonate—as did his Southland branch, which had adopted ji Jaga's case as a sacred cause. After decades of imprisonment, he was freed particularly because of the movement they helped to engineer—along with the deft lawyering of Johnnie Cochran and that, too, of the recent graduate of Yale Law School, Kathleen Neal Cleaver; the freed prisoner exiled in Tanzania (and wed her daughter, Joju Cleaver)—and with the \$4.5 civil judgment wrenched from U.S. authorities, ji Jaga established the Kuji Foundation, which continues to benefit Africans in countless ways, including the provision of water.¹²³

On 28 August 1989, the curtain came down on an era. Newton's funeral took place at Allen Temple Baptist Church in Oakland, with eulogies provided by Seale, Ericka Huggins, and the Rev. Cecil Williams. Born 17 February 1942 in Oak Grove, Louisiana, he lived through world war, Cold War, hot war, Jim Crow, and police terror—and made a difference, flaws aside.¹²⁴

* * *

As Cleaver was departing Algiers, Karenga still languished in prison. In his defense, a comrade of his argued that he “never sought to destroy the government” and “never advocated violence” and that he kept L.A. “from bursting into a second major riot” in 1968 after the assassination of Dr. King. He worked with “Boise Cascade...executives from Rand...IT&T...[and] Bank of America...along with Dr. J. Alfred Cannon and millionaire Charles Kettering [they] built the Mafundi Institute” in Black L.A.¹²⁵ Taking to the pages of *Black Scholar*, Imamu Clyde Halisi spoke of Karenga as being “in captivity.” The trial that led to this result relied on “two obvious agents, George and Carletta Armstrong,” while the charges against Deborah Jones were dropped when she testified. The “justification for keeping Maulana [Karenga] in isolation was that there was a constant possibility that some Panther or ex-Panther would do him bodily harm. Yet both Maulana

for point with the workings of the Gestapo: a secret police agency *outside* of any control system.” [emphasis-original] See also Ouagadougou, *Black Guerrilla Family*, 218: After the slaying of George Jackson, BGF split into a “political faction” and a “criminal faction.”

123. Magnarella, *Black Panther in Exile*, 252. See the thick file on Cochran in Box 66, Julian Dixon Papers, CSU-LA (abbrev. Julian Dixon Papers).

124. Funeral Program, 1989, Box 5, B. Kwaku Duren Papers. Cf. Kate Coleman and Paul Avery, article in *New Times*, 10 July 1978, Ron Wilkins Papers: The party is portrayed, albeit one-sidedly, as a “street gang” enmeshed in “arson, extortion, beatings, even murder.” To a degree, this was a structural flaw stemming from an ideological reliance on the lumpen. Cf. Hugh Pearson, *Shadow of a Panther: Huey Newton and the Price of Black Power in America*, New York: Da Capo, 1995.

125. Memo from Ken Msemaji, 7 January 1974, Mervyn Dymally Papers.

Karenga and Dav[id] Hilliard were imprisoned at Vacaville" and got along fairly well.¹²⁶

Looking back in March 1974, Karenga argued that the "gun is not god, nor is culture a divine cure-all"; thus, UCLA in January 1969 was a "shootout" involving "two rival and hostile groups," for at that moment, "people in the movement were saying, 'If you ain't got a *piece*, you won't have no peace.'" Like many others, he defenestrated Louis Tackwood, the self-confessed informant for the government—he was a "lying...liar"—and defended "George Stiner-Ali and Larry Stiner-Watani," the accused in January 1969. Even *Muhammad Speaks*, he said disgustedly, gave Tackwood space to "spew forth his lies."¹²⁷

He was referring to the bombshell allegations made by this informant and agent, which were highlighted by the BPP. Tackwood began collaborating with the LAPD in 1968 and was in on the ground floor when Karenga's forces were "infiltrated and [were] being helped in every way possible by the LAPD. It was a "snitch" organization at the top," he asserted. "I had been delivering money and guns to the Karenga people" and "he was getting paid." Tackwood's comrade, "Cotton" Smith, who was a singlehanded agent of destruction against Golden State Panthers generally, wanted to "use the Mafia to kill the Panthers" (reference here the aforementioned murder of Sandra Pratt).¹²⁸

126. Imamu Clyde Halisi, "Maulan Karenga: Black Leader in Captivity," *Black Scholar*, May 1972, Mervyn Dymally Papers. Cf. Jones, *What We Stood For*, 77, 79, 96, 98: US members "took turns raping me." This group, she said, was a "cult" where "women...were simply groomed to be servants to the men."

127. Statement by Karenga, March 1974, Mervyn Dymally Papers. Cf. *The Black Panther*, 13 December 1975: In response to the story "FBI set up Karenga Murder of BPP leaders," by sending phony letters to the nationalist philosopher, Karenga said, "We always suspected they (the cartoons) came from the police. We played into their precious hands and were tricked." See Newton on Karenga in the mid-1960s: "Skinny, bright and articulate fellow named Ron Karenga," *The Black Panther*, 15 November 1975. As for Don Warden and his Afro-American Association of that era, a precursor of Karenga-style Black Nationalism, Newton saw them as bourgeois. Karenga was chair of the AAA from 1962 until he founded his own group in 1965: "Legal Information Packet," April 1974, Mervyn Dymally Papers. Cf. *The Black Panther*, 16 December 1978: Claude Elvin Hubert, accused in Carter-Huggins slayings, sited in Guyana at the time of the Jonestown mass suicides/murders captained by the Bay Area's Rev. Jim Jones. FBI agent Perry says he sees Stiner brothers and Hubert at the FBI office in L.A. and also says that the agency's Brandon Cleary drove them away on the day of the UCLA shootings. *The Black Panther*, 17 December 1977: Sworn affidavit by Darthard Perry says killers at UCLA were tied to the FBI; he says he was in L.A. from 1968-1975. Cf. Newton to Rev. Jones in Guyana, 10 September 1977, Reel 4, Black Panther Documents: Pledge to "work in close unity together."

128. *The Black Panther*, 24 April 1976. It is not easy to credit the words of a fraudster like Tackwood; however, it is evident that he shaped anti-Karenga visions within the party. Cf. *The Black Panther*, 1 May 1976: Tackwood fingers the respected academic J. Herman Blake as participant in an assassination plot against Newton. James Carr was portrayed as Newton's "bodyguard," while the "Santa Cruz Police Department was tapping Herman Blake's phone." See also *The Black Panther*, 24 December 1977: The Criminal Conspiracy Section of the LAPD admitted seeking to disrupt the BPP from its inception through the 1970s; "specifically mentioned" were "Cotton" Smith and Tackwood. *The Black Panther*, 31 December 1977: News director of local TV station KABC, Dennis Swanson,

Although hotly denied by Karenga, Elaine Brown remained a fierce critic of the professor. After 1965, said the Oaklander, he "had just rid himself of a white wife and a British accent" and, appropriately cleansed, "shaved the heads and minds" of the followers. Speaking in 1976, she continued to insist, "It is my belief now, as it was then, that Karenga works for and with the FBI."¹²⁹ Newton was not as blunt, but he did say in 1977 that Karenga "had to leave Los Angeles and move his operation to San Diego. Now his group has faded from the scene,"¹³⁰ a premature estimate.

Reflecting the era, in 1977 as the Panthers were on the ropes, still reeling from brutal blows administered by the state, Karenga too was "busy preparing for a trip to China" while maintaining, "I'm a nationalist and a socialist." Again, he contended that the UCLA tragedy in January 1969 had been misinterpreted: "alleged murders were shootouts between rival groups" in that a comrade of his was "seriously wounded." And speaking of working with the authorities, there was a "conviction" of his comrades that was "obtained [via BPP] cooperation with the police." As for his philosophical contributions, he argued strongly that "Cultural Nationalism is not anti-white or anti-socialist." He sought to refute newspaper accounts of his conferring with Gov. Reagan during tense moments in the Southland and sought to undermine further the credibility of Louis Tackwood and his "refusal to take a lie detector test" because "he was lying about me." And what about the purportedly unwarranted "negative attitude toward nationalists evidenced by Don Freed," the noted Panther booster? He also joined the long line of Cleaver detractors, blaming him for the "disruption of the cordial relationship" he "once had with the BPP"; thus, "the last Free Huey rally in Los Angeles," he said, was a "joint project" of his comrades and the Panthers.¹³¹

said that police chief Ed Davis sought to pressure him to drop an investigation of the LAPD. *The Black Panther*, 7 January 1978: "'Crazy' Ed Davis" to run for governor, this after keynoting the John Birch Society convention in 1976. On Davis and the Birchers, see *Los Angeles Times*, 7 March 1976. *The Black Panther*, 24 March-6 April 1980: "FBI set up murders of L.A. party leaders."

¹²⁹ *The Black Panther*, 3 July 1976, and 12 November 1977.

¹³⁰ *The Black Panther*, 7 May 1977.

¹³¹ Karenga Interview, 22 June 1977, Reel 5, Black Panther Documents. See letter from Freed and other L.A. progressives rebuking Karenga: *The Black Panther*, 7 May 1977. See also Ron Karenga, *Oral History*, 30 May 1976, CSU-Fullerton: Here he faced an aggressive interrogator, Joan Feeney, and he denied he "didn't cool anything" in the aftermath of Dr. King's 1968 assassination, as had been alleged. As for his comrades, the Stiners accused in the UCLA slayings, they "escaped by walking out off the visiting quarters outside of San Quentin on a visitor's weekend when their parents were visiting." He conceded that "some of the mistakes we made were" those of "what we call narrow nationalists...we cut ourselves off too much from the larger society and so when we did that, people that would have been our allies and helped us in this struggle against suppression, which the FBI and the local police waged against us, they weren't there because we had cut off our relationships with it, so we see that's wrong now. Another thing is that nationalism will never deal with the question of capitalism, that can only be solved by [a] socialist solution...must begin to get away from the dog-eat-dog mentality that capitalism has imposed on us and accept the fact that socialism is the only solution to capitalist deformation and denial. And by socialism I'm again mean[ing] shared wealth. But

As matters evolved, Karenga was a kind of victor after the turmoil subsided.¹³² Contention over UCLA had been a sticking point between his forces and the Panthers. His comrade, to be known as Molefe Asante, was the first leader of UCLA's Center for Afro-American Studies, establishing its library and M.A. program and penning an admiring portrait of Karenga.¹³³

* * *

Mervyn Dymally, with roots in Trinidad & Tobago, became Lieutenant Governor, then a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, but this propulsion was generated in no small measure by the obtaining correlation of forces—a strong Black left symbolized by the BPP and the “Free Angela” movement. But as the 1970s unwound, he knew that things had changed. Along with fellow congressman Augustus Hawkins, he was among the soundest ideologically of Black liberals, accepted by all sides, including Karenga, whom he had aided during his imprisonment,¹³⁴ longtime political prisoner Wesley Robert Wells,¹³⁵ and Prof. Davis, whose freedom he supported. Tellingly, it was Dymally who approached Newton in collaborating; writing from his prison cell in San Luis Obispo, the Oaklander did “appreciate very much the interest that you have shown in me,” but “I will not be able to do the book with you.”¹³⁶ A wise

specifically, and in detail what I mean is one, collective ownership and control of the means to satisfy human needs.” Was this the entire U.S.? Or was it socialism in one Black Nation within the U.S.? How would that work when the U.S. has sought to destabilize beyond its shores: Cuba, for example. Cf. Friedrich Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, Scotts Valley, Calif.: CreateSpace, 2015.

132. “Legal Information Packet,” April 1974, Mervyn Dymally Papers: Born on Bastille Day, 1941. Karenga was educated in York, Penn., and once worked with Conscientious Objectors.

133. Molefe Asante, *Maulana Karenga: An Intellectual Portrait*, Cambridge [U.K.]: Polity, 2009.

134. “Imamu Amiri Baraka to Dymally, 16 May 1974, Box 108, Mervyn Dymally Papers: “I visited Maulana Karenga in San Luis Obispo to discuss his case.... Meeting was called off” with Black pols since “a Julian Dixon” of L.A. “had objected to its being held.” However, the Newark writer and activist, then in transition to Marxism, appreciated Dymally’s “support for Karenga.”

135. Wells to Dymally, 20 October 1971, Box 108, Mervyn Dymally Papers: “I am California’s oldest prisoner in terms of constructive years behind walls... ‘there are some here who are afraid of you: afraid of the influence with certain inmates,’” or “so he was instructed, despite a ‘good’ conduct record.... that is why I am locked up and have been since August 22, 1971,” i.e., since the slaying of George Jackson. Henry W. Kerr, chairman of Adult Authority, to State Senator Nicholas Petris, 10 November 1972: His “disciplinary record includes over 100 infractions... fighting, disrespect toward officials, aggressive homosexual activities... extremes of belligerence. However, Wells had the advantage of competent counsel. Wells to Dymally, 11 December 1973: “My attorney Charles R. Garry,” also Branton. *People’s World*, 6 July 1974: Wells now free “reminding me to change his PW [CP organ] sub from Vacaville to Delancey Street.” Cf. “On Wesley Robert Wells,” ca. 1953, Box 32. Mervyn Dymally Papers. Then 44, and raised in L.A., he entered San Quentin in 1928 at the age of 19: Walton Phillips Collection. *The Black Panther*, 24 January 1976, “Sudden death” of Wells.

136. Newton to Dymally, 25 February 1970, Box 107, Mervyn Dymally Papers.

politico who knew his constituency, the wavy-haired Angeleno with a lilting voice betraying his Caribbean roots and his mixed African and South Asian heritage told "Dear Huey," that he was "disappointed" since "a market exists for this kind of work and generous advance is being offered": he then insisted, "reconsider your decision," to no avail.¹³⁷ Dymally was well aware of his constituents' interests¹³⁸ and also knew that what the Panthers represented had significant purchase overseas, to the detriment of oppressors at home.¹³⁹ As the reaction to the Panthers manifested in yanking more Black men in particular into prison, Dymally responded energetically.¹⁴⁰

By 1975, he was Lieutenant Governor, a breakthrough buoyed by a Black militancy then being eclipsed and, inevitably, the elite pounced. The *Los Angeles Times*, which had undermined the CP during the Smith Act trial, now pelted Dymally with spurious and specious charges.¹⁴¹ By 1979 Dymally might have thought that his concern for Black prisoners was a case of enlightened and farsighted self-interest. As he told Congressman Hawkins, a "former California [Attorney General] has said publicly that I will be indicted," while his "sister's school has been 'cased' by the FBI...my brother-in-law was indicted...FBI questioning of my staff about my involvement in the deaths of two of my former campaign workers." It was a "horror story. The witch hunt has become a nightmare."¹⁴² Indeed.

So, Dymally was driven from the Number 2 executive post in the largest state to serving as one of 435 legislators in Congress, a kind of lateral demotion—a metaphor for the Black Condition in the late 20th century. Still in Congress in 1988, he found himself at odds with Jonathan Bernstein of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, who became involved in an electoral primary in the Angeleno's district. Congressman Dymally was accused of having "supported militants and Black Supremacists," speaking of his support for "the Black Hebrews," comprised heavily of Black Americans who had established a base in Dimona, Israel, with about 5000 sited there ultimately. They had a base among African-Americans, one of the many outgrowths of the decline of Black militancy which created an ideological vacuum, filled by diverse forces. The congressman

137. Dymally to Newton, 9 March 1970, Box 107, Mervyn Dymally Papers.

138. Dymally to Newton, 23 July 1970, Box 107, Mervyn Dymally Papers: "Early this year I conducted a study of voter reaction to the police and Panthers in Los Angeles...since seeing you, I have been to Soledad twice" and "spoken to the three Soledad Brothers," particularly George Jackson.

139. M.M. McElkenny, U.K., to State Senator Dymally, ca. 1973, Box 107, Mervyn Dymally Papers: Soledad Brothers case "dragged across the media in Britain...."

140. "Concerned Black and Chicano Prisoners" to Lieutenant Governor Dymally, 19 November 1974, Box 105, Mervyn Dymally Papers: "Enthusiastically applaud your election.... Folsom is the most oppressive institution in the entire system."

141. "Analysis of article written by *Times* staffers...about the Urban Affairs Institute and Lieutenant Governor [Dymally] involvement in that Institute," 3 July 1975, Box 22, Mervyn Dymally Papers. *The Black Panther*, 21 July 1975: Defense of Dymally in light of *Times* attack.

142. Dymally to Hawkins, 20 June 1979, Box 17, Mervyn Dymally Papers.

pleaded, "I have consistently voted for aid to Israel" in a record "better than some Jewish members"—true, but possibly inimical to the best interests of his constituents, unlike allying with Newton at the apex of his influence. He even "visited" and supported the "Jewish refuseniks in Moscow," those who wished to migrate to Israel in part to bulwark the majority in the demographic contest with Palestinians, while weakening socialism during the Cold War: a double whammy in other words. He even bent the knee to Moshe Arad, Israel's envoy in Washington, on behalf of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, an inflexible rightist,¹⁴³ the likes of which he would have battled in Sacramento. Dymally hung on to his office but decided to depart for the more lucrative position of lobbying his former colleagues.

Ironically, he ran into brick walls there too, as he sought to influence bilateral Algiers-Washington relations, about two decades after Cleaver's departure from North Africa. By early 1993 he was visiting Algiers, but on a different mission than the one Panthers once envisioned. He—and his Dymally International Group—sought to confer with the Foreign Minister and the U.S. envoy in Algiers on behalf of his client Sonatrach, a hydrocarbons giant now registered in the British Virgin Islands and sited in London.¹⁴⁴ Dymally was negotiating a huge fertilizer and liquified natural gas deal.¹⁴⁵ But disappointment crept in, as Dymally's rise into Big Business, as in politics, had been enlivened by having behind him a mobilized and conscious Black community. But by 1993 the halcyon days of Black Communists and Panthers were a fading memory—this was just after Prof. Davis had departed the CP. Thus, he was like the man behind the curtain in the *Wizard of Oz*, outwardly formidable, actually frail. "How crushed I was," said the former Congressman, "to read...your government has selected a lobbyist in Washington," speaking of the Algerian Foreign Ministry and their rebuffing of him. It was disrespect, a climbdown from the days of Cleaver's presence. "Your government has selected a lobbyist in Washington...without ever responding to my proposal," he wailed. "Surely no one in the U.S. was more concerned, knowledgeable, experienced or committed to your country as I was"—likely accurate. "I considered myself to be a close friend of many players in your

143. Dymally to Moshe Ara, 29 March 1988, Box 14, Mervyn Dymally Papers: "In the seven and half years since I have been on the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, I do not know of any time when a Head of State was ushered in and out of a meeting with such utter disregard for the members present." See also thick file on ties between Israel and South African apartheid, 1980s and 1990s, Box 6, Julian Dixon Papers. See also Box 133 re: Jewish issues more generally.

144. Dymally to H.E. Nourredine Yazid, Algerian Ambassador to U.S., 5 February 1993, Box 2, Mervyn Dymally Papers.

145. Dymally to Abderrahmane Benside, Algerian envoy, 4 March 1993, Box 2, Mervyn Dymally Papers.

government"—true. He was "deeply disappointed considering the time and energy I put into this effort"¹⁴⁶—unerringly.

Times had changed. The NAACP had entered a Faustian bargain with the U.S. ruling class whereby they would be the major conduit and interlocutor for anti-Jim Crow concessions. For a while Dr. King interrupted this presumed reverie but that era was diminished by 1968, with the Panthers and the CP also not sufficiently engaged by the Association. Contradictorily, this also meant that the ideology that privileged business deals and the magic of the marketplace would provide a way out for Black Americans could not take flight, as Dymally's sour experience demonstrated: It was like an airplane with one functioning wing seeking to take flight.

The lateral demotion of the Black community continued, recognized by L.A. City Councilman Nate Holden in 1996. He reflected on "terrible allegations" concerning an alleged "link between the CIA and the drug trade during the early 1980s," which was "shameful and disgusting if true"—in fact, "frightening."¹⁴⁷ As adumbrated in the previous chapter, this diabolical skein of events also filled the vacuum as Black leftism and militancy were compelled to embark on a forced march away from its previous role.

Then in 1992 came the explosion following the acquittal of officers of the law captured on tape in a savage and repellent beatdown of Black motorist Rodney King.¹⁴⁸ Like 1965, this was an inchoate rebellion—although the diversity of those amassed in the streets reflected the migration patterns stemming from that pivotal year. Like 1965, it too was a reflection of an ideological and organizing vacuum, driven by the Red Scare; and in 1992 this explosion was driven by the battering of the successor movements and trends that had arisen in the aftermath of the Watts conflagration, principally the BPP and/or the Black Scare.

* * *

146. Dymally to Director General "Amerique" of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 26 July 1993, Box 2, Mervyn Dymally Papers.

147. Holden to Congressman Dixon, 6 September 1996, Box 9, Julian Dixon Papers. In the same Box, see L. Britt Snider, Inspector General of CIA, to Dixon, 8 October 1998: Attaching the 400-page "Unclassified version of Volume II of our report" on the allegations concerning the Agency's relationship to drugs flooding Black L.A., he concedes the basic crux of the explosive allegation that the CIA ally—the counter-revolutionaries of Nicaragua—were involved in this scandal but questioned if the CIA, surveillance expertise aside, was witting. Cf. Gary Webb, *Dark Alliance: The CIA, the Contras and the Cocaine Crack Explosion*, New York: Seven Stories Press, 1998 [foreword by Congresswoman Maxine Waters].

148. See Home, *Fire This Time*, passim. See Congressman Dixon to Mayor Bradley, 13 March 1991, Box 46, Julian Dixon Papers, on Rodney King.

With the seismic 1972 victory delivering freedom to Angela Davis and her subsequent elevation to the global stratosphere as icon and fundraiser, the CP seemingly had recovered from the devastation of the Smith Act trials. Don Wheeldin, Black and a former Red, was running for office in Pasadena in 1973; he was teaching at USC and won the support of star footballer Anthony Davis, a student of his.¹⁴⁹ There had been the founding of mass organizations—particularly, the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression—which, as noted, established fraternal ties with Southland Panthers. By 1976 a press account reported that this group was in rude good health, having 150 affiliates and chapters in 30 different states.¹⁵⁰ After the Copernican Portuguese Revolution of 1974, a great leap forward toward the liberation of Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and South Africa, Emily Gibson, billed as a “former reporter” for the *Sentinel*, addressed what was called an “overflow crowd” at the recently formed L.A. Institute for Marxist Studies.¹⁵¹ A few months later, the annual banquet for the CP organ was termed a “tremendous breakthrough” with a “thousand people” present, “double the previous year’s attendance.” The head table included the influential cleric, the Rev. Albert Dorth, and seated nearby was Bert Corona, the Chicano leader.¹⁵² After that the Institute reported that it instructed more students than in any previous session.¹⁵³

However, there were preexisting fissures stretching back to Davis’s jailing, when disputes about whether San Rafael was a righteous rebellion or an anarchistic adventure, that had yet to be resolved. And even before that 7 August 1970 episode there were other tensions that continued to roil. And these tensions manifested precisely in the Southland. Moreover, the campuses, which had served as a bulwark for the CP—as Davis’s case exemplified—continued to reel from rightist lancing. At UC Irvine, the left-leaning Professor John Carlos Rowe faced controversy.¹⁵⁴

Party Chairman William Taylor, whose nemesis Dorothy Healey had departed the ranks with a bang, resigning in a live radio broadcast, was now an unrivaled leader at their office at 1250 Wilshire Boulevard. But by 1977 there was another sensitive matter that had arisen. “Dear Comrades,” he began, the “question of a party position on homosexuality may be on the agenda...of the Central Committee.” Here he might have benefited from consultation with Newton, but by this point diplomatic relations between the two parties were not ideal. “We hope that it will be,” he contended, an all-out assault since “homosexuality” was

149. *People's World*, 17 February 1973.

150. *Soho News* [Manhattan], 19-26 August 1976.

151. *People's World*, 10 August 1974.

152. *People's World*, 12 October 1974. See Mario T. García, *Memories of Chicano History: The Life and Narrative of Bert Corona*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

153. *People's World*, 26 October 1974.

154. Memo from Associate Counsel John Landon to Assistant Chancellor Eloise Kloke, 25 June 1975. Series 2A, Box 250, File on “Loyalty Oaths,” Central Records Collection, UC-Irvine.

"non productive and non creative" and, besides, "Gay Liberation is not a legitimate movement" but, instead, was a reflection of "psychological instability" that was "incompatible with party membership."¹⁵⁵ This was occurring as pioneering queer Communist Harry Hay remained politically active in radical circles,¹⁵⁶ at least sporadically.¹⁵⁷ This was occurring as down the freeway, the San Diego Coalition for Gay Rights had joined the antifascist alliance.¹⁵⁸

The problem was not only the inhumanity of what Taylor proposed. It was also that—perhaps unbeknownst to him—there were several closeted comrades, bellwethers in fact, and their goodwill and understanding were not assured when eruptions shook the CP in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991; departing the ranks were Charlene Mitchell, James Jackson—and Angela Davis—among others.

There were other bumps along the road. Karl Yoneda of San Francisco, perhaps the leading Japanese-American, if not Asian-American comrade, thought that the CP's economic guru, Victor Perlo, painted much too rosy a picture of those of his ethnicity in Hawaii.¹⁵⁹

155. Taylor to "Dear Comrades," 22 November 1977, Box 255, CPUSA Records-NYU. This was a turnabout from an era when L.A. was in the vanguard of this movement. See e.g., Harry Hay to Dorothy Healey, 3 June 1983, Box 11, Harry Hay Papers: Reminds her of "My Original Call," 9 August 1948, and "Revised as of July 7th, 1950." Cf. same box, "Reactions," Issue #123, 19 July 1990: 40 years ago Hay and comrades launched Mattachine Society. Box 7, same collection: "Organization and Structure of the (Underground) Southern California Mattachine Society (1950-1953)... 'Guilds'/Chapters in Echo Park, Westwood/Santa Monica, Ocean Park/Venice, Long Beach, Palos Verdes, Laguna, Whittier, West Hollywood, Midtown. Just as the BPP could have benefited from listening to the CP when it came to analyzing global affairs, the latter would have benefited from a consultation with Newton on this movement. Cf. *New York Times*, 6 March 2023: Judy Heumann, Disability Rights pioneer, recalled a mass protest in San Francisco in 1977 when the BPP delivered gratis to protesters "ribs and fried chicken."

156. Hay to Dorothy Healey, 13 May 1981, Box 14, Harry Hay Papers: "Because we are four people shoe-horned into a very small bungalow, my Marxist books must remain packed in storage...I want to give quote and source for the Marxist precept which underlies Lenin's concept of these three preconditions to Revolution."

157. Healey to Hay, 8 October 1984, Box 14: "Why you felt impelled to write your letter denouncing John McTernan and Ben Margolis...because he didn't represent you before HUAC in 1955...why—30 years later—it erupts into your tirade?" See Hay to Healey, 4 November 1984, same box: "The primitive politically unconstrained—though—obsolete WASP hetero-male EGO is my enemy." [emphasis-original] Same collection, Box 24: Newsletter of North American Man Boy Love Association, September 1987, and Press Release of 23 June 1994. NAMBLA will be allowed to march in Spirit of Stonewall march, says Hay. Box 41: L.A. "1959 Mid Winter Institute...Annual Banquet Speaker Dr. Mario Palmieri, 'Classical Boy-Love and Modern Civilization.'"

158. Ellen Miller and Aurelio Skeete-Hassan of S.D. Coalition for Gay Rights to Herman Baca of Committee for Chicano Rights, ca. 1977, Box 68, Herman Baca Papers-UCSD (abbrev. Herman Baca Papers): "We see the Klan as a common threat. Thomas Metzger, head of the California KKK" believed that queers should receive the "death penalty."

159. Report on the Asian Commission to CP "Third World Conference," 9 February 1974, Box 153, CPUSA Records-NYU: In 1908 U.S. labor boss Samuel Gompers said, "Exclude all Japanese and Chinese." 1941: "Serious political blunder" by the CP: "suspend all members of Japanese ancestry—

Then, like the BPP, there were other crises that had external roots. Organizational Secretary in the Southland CP, Matty Berkelhammer, was compelled to take a leave of absence with the draconian measure of "no personal contact with the party during his leave."¹⁶⁰ His post was critical to the humming and thrumming of the party engines but also, personally, it deprived him of association of those with whom he had bonded. The problem was that he had a "close personal relationship" with Olga Quiles since 1981, which became known by late 1982. However, during the course of this period she told him that she had been a paid informer for the FBI from 1972 to 1974 and he—it was reported—"continues his relationship with Olga" today despite his leadership of the county and state—though he seemed to know of the obliquely noted "lumpen tendencies" in her family.¹⁶¹ Her former spouse who inveigled her into this informant role wound up committing suicide.¹⁶² No matter. He was expelled. "I am not an enemy of the party," he cried, while Ms. Quiles was a "victim of FBI manipulation" while "her love for me is sincere," a bruising end to a relationship with the CP in that he had been an "active member" for his "entire adult life."¹⁶³ However, the CP was skittish. Before this controversy, the party's office had been bombed by Samuel Hamilton Dunlap, leading to the arrest of this Marine.¹⁶⁴ In 1983 the Los Angeles branch of the Davis-sponsored National Alliance was in "receivership," according to Frank Chapman, a result of conflict with Deacon Alexander and Ben Pennington.¹⁶⁵

And despite Chairman Winston's admission that Franklin Alexander was "particularly gifted as a mass leader," the latter had sober news: "the party here," he exclaimed in 1984, "is in crisis" with an "absolute decline in Black membership" and virtually no "Communist Party presence" in the "two major Black communities west of the Rocky Mountains—South Central for Los Angeles and Oakland."¹⁶⁶ By 1994, Alexander committed suicide. His comrade and spouse, Kendra Alexander, expired in 1993 as a result of an accidental fire in her Berkeley home.¹⁶⁷

* * *

also their spouses." In same box see Yoneda, *Pacific Citizen*, 24-31 December 1971: Lynching of Katsu Goto in Hawaii in 1889.

160. Report, 2 November 1982, Box 255, CPUSA Records-NYU.

161. Report, ca. July 1972, Box 255, CPUSA Records-NYU.

162. Interview with Olga Quiles, July 1982, Box 255., CPUSA Records-NYU.

163. Matty Berkelhammer to Chairman Winston and General Secretary Gus Hall, May 1983, Box 255, CPUSA Records-NYU.

164. Carl Winter to CP Executive, 10 November 1980, Box 255, CPUSA Records-NYU.

165. Frank Chapman to "L.A. NAARPR," 1 December 1983, Box 255, CPUSA Records-NYU.

166. Alexander to "Gus and Winnie," 21 May 1984, Box 255, CPUSA Records-NYU.

167. *Daily World*, 4 June 1994.

As the CP and Panthers reeled, feeling the vacuum were not only drug dealers with suspicious ties to U.S. foreign policy but also various armed groups with questionable agendas. This included the Symbionese Liberation Army,¹⁶⁸ many of whose leaders perished in a fiery, blazing shootout in L.A. in 1974.¹⁶⁹ They had been involved in a kidnapping of heiress Patty Hearst and, seemingly, converted her to their cause as she was photographed accompanying them in a bank robbery. Newton, sensing he and his comrades were under suspicion—falsely—contacted “Mr. and Mrs. Randolph Hearst” directly in their elite suburb in Hillsborough, south of San Francisco informing them that “We have no relationship with and do not support the [SLA].”¹⁷⁰ Longtime BPP backer Donald Freed and his Citizens Research and Investigation concluded that SLA leader, Donald De Freeze, also known as “Cinque,” was actually an “informer” for the LAPD.¹⁷¹

Before decamping to the Southland, De Freeze was in the Bay Area and as his SLA was grabbing headlines, San Francisco was enduring the so-called “Zebra” killings, involving the deaths of 15 Euro-Americans and the wounding of eight others, maybe more, reportedly at the hands of four African Americans over a six-month period. What ensued was a mass dragnet and random stopping of young Black men, often without any guideline such as probable cause or even reasonable suspicion. Mayor Joseph Alioto, reputedly with organized crime connections of his own,¹⁷² admitted boastfully that this was “police action without parallel” in the city.¹⁷³ The Rev. Cecil Williams, a progressive Black cleric, warned of a “war by the Establishment of a police state.”¹⁷⁴ Yet when the mayor was “hooted, spat upon and struck on the head...most of the demonstrators...were white,” and as “police...stopped 500 Black men in the past week”¹⁷⁵—this was clearly perceived as insufficient by some. The NAACP protested but with no awareness of how their strategy of shunning the CP, then the BPP, had destabilized the anti-racist movement, driving Black militants into inchoate and individualized actions.¹⁷⁶ When the BPP was beaten into evanescence, Black militancy lost an entity that was willing to engage across racial lines.¹⁷⁷

168. Les Payne and Tim Findley, *The Life and Death of the SLA*, New York: Ballantine, 1976.

169. *People's World*, 22 June 1974.

170. Newton to the Hearsts, 12 February 1974, Reel 41, Black Panther Documents.

171. Report, 28 September 1974, Reel 4, Black Panther Documents. See also *Los Angeles Times*, 18 May 1974.

172. *New York Times*, 2 May 1970.

173. Clipping, 18 May 1974, Carton 54, NAACP Papers-UCB.

174. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 21 April 1974.

175. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 23 April 1974.

176. Undated press release, Carton 54, NAACP Papers-UCB: “Police stopping Black males.” In same box see undated telegram from Donald McCullum, president of Oakland branch, to Mayor Alioto re: “Your announced ‘dragnet’ of Blacks.”

177. See Kiilu Nyasha to Pratt Defense Committee, 27 May 1990, Vertical File-Geronimo Pratt, Freedom Archives-Berkeley: The committee is “separating into Black and white groups.” See also David Du Bois to Boko Abar in Los Angeles, 15 March 1999, Box 5, B. Kwaku Duren Papers:

This murderous trend was nothing new to the city: From 1966 to 1970 there were the so-called "Zodiac" serial killings, which should have led to serious introspection by the mayor.¹⁷⁸ Certainly, there was a fair amount of hype involved, for "Zebra" was soon followed by the so-called "Death Angels," depicted as a "kind of reverse Ku Klux Klan...fanatical believers in Black separatism" and practitioners of "Martial Arts." They were blamed for "nearly 80 California murderous assaults, principally in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Alameda...counties between September of 1970" to 1974; there were "random shootings of white[s]...or mutilation by heavy-bladed weapons." Ironically, "jails" were "favorite places of recruitment" with "job inducements upon release as one of the inducements."¹⁷⁹ Recruiting young Black men behind bars for jobs? This was the ultimate commentary on the society constructed by capitalism in the aftermath of the bludgeoning of the CP and BPP.

* * *

Due south, by late 1977 the Klan was patrolling the San Diego-Mexico border as Nazi leader David Duke arrived in a helicopter, as if he were a head of state. "White Power" T-shirts were the fashion. The Louisianan was accompanied by Tom Metzger of Fallbrook, leader of the Golden State branch of the KKK. Demonstrators shouted, spat and threw eggs—as the Immigration and Naturalization Service provided Duke security, deemed to be a force with the Pelican State's GOP.¹⁸⁰

The upside, if any, was that Beverly Varga, Dean of Third College at UCSD—which Angela Davis and her comrades had struggled to create under the then name of Lumumba-Zapata—was "horrified" that the "organization of the Ku Klux Klan" was operating along the border.¹⁸¹ Jose Arma of MECHA [Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán], Chicano vanguardists, echoed her: "Such fascist groups as the [KKK] and the American Nazi Party have grown considerably throughout...San Diego County" and were "working openly." Even Clarence Pendleton of the local Urban League—thought to be a reliable Republican—

"Strange emergence in Philadelphia calling itself the New Black Panther Party—taking about 'the armed struggle'...suspicious" but bereft of the Oaklanders' internationalism and socialism.

178. File on Zebra killings, 1974, Box 17, Joseph Alioto Papers. In the same box, see Press Release, 23 April 1974: Thus far, 503 stops and 160 interrogations.

179. Press Release, 1 May 1974, Box 17, Joseph Alioto Papers.

180. *San Diego Evening Tribune*, 17 October 1977. See also *San Diego Union*, 17 October 1977.

181. Beverly Varga to "Whom it May Concern," 17 October 1977, Box 68, Herman Baca Papers.

rebuked the ultra-rightists.¹⁸² Perhaps his vision was illuminated by the cross burnings that descended upon a not so dandy San Diego.¹⁸³ Masses flocked to the barricades spurred by Voz del Pueblo and the *People's World*: "leaflets were distributed," said Sam Gouldin, "in [the] white community downtown and in North Park," as a kind of vaccination.¹⁸⁴

"Grand Dragon" Metzger was then supervising "blood donor programs," with non-Christians unallowed—a not so subtle message to Jewish, Muslim, and other religious minorities. He admitted that there was "probably some" concordance with Nazis "generally in the North county." And, yes, they patrolled the border with approximately five cars, two men to a car, because "we have over 100,000 Vietnamese illegal aliens in this country alone." His comrades in Texas had armed to beat them back. "We have many, many volunteers...who call us." Yes, he owned guns and objected stridently to "inflaming Chicano elements." "I have four children," he cried, who were "harassed quite a bit at school...a daughter was attacked" as some were "threatening to kill us and burn us out...throwing beer bottles and...rocks at the house."¹⁸⁵

Antifascists along the border, bred on a recent diet prepared by the CP and BPP, were unwilling to enter the darkest night of reaction. In May 1978 a Klansman was shot to death near Descanso in the county: a single gunshot to the head.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸². Clarence Pendleton to Herman Baca, 22 October 1977, Box 68, Herman Baca Papers.

¹⁸³. *San Diego Evening Tribune*, 21 October 1977.

¹⁸⁴. Sam Gouldin to Baca, 26 October 1977, Box 68, Herman Baca Papers.

¹⁸⁵. Deposition of Metzger, 20 December 1977, Box 40, Herman Baca Papers.

¹⁸⁶. *San Diego Union*, 16 May 1978. See also Materials on Angela Davis, Box 3, Harold Keen Papers, SEDSU. Matsemela-Odom, "From Southern California," 287: San Diego "became arguably the most active home to white right activism outside of the South." Despite the progressive breezes from Mexico, this border town long had been a fortress of reaction. See e.g., N.B. Greene to Dear Sir [Board of Education], 20 December 1934, Box 1, Vesta Muehleisen Papers, San Diego History Center: Congratulations on denying space for rental to "Communitistic groups." In the same box, see *Liberty*, 2 February 1935: As for "Communitistic agitators in our schools—hang the traitors." In the same box, see the Newsletter of "Workers' Defense," of the CP-led International Labor Defense, ca. 1930s: "Terror" in Imperial Valley, "vigilantes again kidnapped civil liberties union representatives...seized...driven out into the desert, beaten and left stranded...[others] beaten" to enforce a "system of peonage" in this "drive against the Cannery and Industrial Workers Industrial Union," which had counted Dorothy Healey as cadre. "Homes of leaders have been ransacked" in this attempt to "force all Valley citizens to join the campaign of suppression and violence"; there remained those who did "fear to refuse to join the Anti-Communist League," but "anyone who refuses to join...is put down as a Communist sympathizer" with untoward consequences. In the same box see also undated account of Associated Farmers of Riverside County involved in a trial of CP leaders for violation of the state's Criminal Syndicalism laws: Red Caroline Decker "gave the crowded courtroom a practical demonstration of the 'classless' society...during the morning recess [as] Miss Decker affectionately embraced and exchanged osculatory salutations with a large and exceedingly black regress [sic]... even [her] fellow defendants...were disconcerted at her flaunting of the polite conventions." At the same site, see also KKK Minutes, 2 February 1933, *V.W. Kenaston Papers*: Twenty attend meeting. Query posed as to how to improve the organization. Response: "I would

suggest a Bible lesson" and a proposed "reduction of taxes of at least 50%." In the same collection, see also "Kloran or Ritual of the Women of the [KKK]," 1928, and "Constitution and Laws of the Women of the [KKK]...adopted by First Imperial Klonoconvocation [*sic*] at St. Louis, Missouri on the Sixth day of January 1927."

Epilogue

The Struggle Continues, 1989-2024

As I write, a good deal of the news from the Southland is not positive, as far as African-Americans are concerned. But rarely grasped is the reason for this malaise. By late 2023 the Golden State contained a population of nearly 40 million and about 6% were Black. But the poverty rate of this minority was almost 14%, while more than half of this populace was facing difficulty paying for essential needs like food and housing. Tragically, Los Angeles County had the highest poverty rate at 15.5%, and San Diego County was second at 15%—as if these regions were still being punished, as if the vigorousness of the BPP and CP back in the day had yet to be forgotten. Up north the Black populations of San Francisco and Oakland were dropping precipitously; ditto for L.A. as the Black migration to Riverside and San Bernardino counties continued apace.¹

Nowadays Brian Williams, an African American, resides in La Cañada Flintridge in the Southland, an affluent enclave where his home is fenced and gated. And yet he and his family have been harassed repeatedly, as if the 1920s had never disappeared. Actually, as he points out, “race restrictions, housing covenants, real estate agents’ policies and policing practices prevented Black people from living or owning property [there] for decades,” explicating why today only about 1.2% of the town is Black. Not disappearing, not least because of repression of militant antiracism, has been rancid, putrid bigotry.²

Compton had become a substantially Black and Chicano/Latinx city and also had become ravaged by the influx of drugs and its sibling, guns.³ Arising from the

1. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 2 November 2023.

2. *Los Angeles Times*, 20 August 2022. A writer in the *Los Angeles Times* of 26 November 2023, elegiacally—a telling tone nowadays by Black Angelenos—spoke of her youth in Inglewood, now dwarfed by the imposing SoFi Stadium and a harbinger of onrushing gentrification, but which during her youth was a neighborhood of “clerks and carriers for the post office, public school teachers, social workers...and nurses.” She recalled wistfully the still riveting words of W.E.B. Du Bois in 1913: “Nowhere in the United States is the Negro so well and beautifully housed” as in L.A. “But now the Black poor in L.A. either must take their Section 8 vouchers and live in the desert, where affordable housing can be found or fall further into poverty, or leave.”

3. Bernard Arafat, Oral History: “One of the things we don’t talk about in the cocaine epidemic was basically how they were able to wipe out a whole voting bloc...of Black people through South Central and Compton.... the demographic change...came about because of the cocaine epidemic.” Cf. Newton

ashes was a variation of a new musical form—rap, grounded in hip-hop. Marion “Suge” Knight grew up in this city and environment and built a record label, “Death Row,” that attracted a poet *cum* actor, Tupac Shakur, the son of Afeni Shakur from the Manhattan Panther trial of a half century earlier. By 1996, as Knight was gaining traction, Compton’s 10 square miles were divided among 56 groups described as “gangs.” Shakur died from wounds inflicted in Las Vegas, yet another city where the BPP was routed. Suspects, said the *Los Angeles Times*, “were members of the Treetop, Fruit Town, Leuders Park, Elm Lane and Cedar Block Piru gangs.”⁴

Panthers routed, then son of Panthers slain presumably at the hands of “gangs” that proliferated—as Panthers were routed. Still, in the cold light of history, just as the CP could have benefited from an analysis that foregrounded “Settler Colonialism” and the class collaboration that inhered within it when developing a strategic analysis, the BPP could have benefited from a deeper understanding of then existing socialism—or, for that matter, an understanding of how the triumph of national liberation in Africa was inseparable from the socialist camp, which they often denounced.⁵

Of course, that was not the only story emerging from Compton, though sometimes it seemed that way owing to how the city was framed in the local and national mass communications media. Receiving short shrift was the uplifting story of Arturo Ybarra, founder of the Watts Century Latino Organization and one-time student activist in Mexico. He also claimed African ancestry and served as a bridge in the community where he resided, which was at times riven by racial alongside ethnic tensions, as the city once again was undergoing transformation.⁶

Reverberations from the Southland not only resonated in Mexico. Robert Singleton, an academic at UCLA during the controversy surrounding Professor Davis, in the early 21st century was in touch with self-described “Freedom

to Bert Schneider, 16 January 1979, Reel 45, Black Panther Documents: “Feel very ashamed of my inexcusable, self induced insanity...when the white witch can take such control as to destroy your most valued relationships, it’s time to quit...I vow never again to indulge...remorse and sadness.”

4. *Los Angeles Times*, 7 October 2023. Fortunately, Tupac Shakur was not the only Panther “cub.” The prosecutor in Fulton County, Georgia—Fani Willis—seeking to bring the 45th U.S. President to justice, is the daughter of John Floyd, longtime L.A. activist affiliated with an earlier iteration of the Black Panthers: *New York Times*, 5 February 2023.

5. See e.g., Lodge, *Red Road to Freedom*, 147, 157, 165, 210, 315, 320, 331, 390, 403. Early 1930s, CP there gets 12,000 pounds from the Communist International sited in Moscow. Dora Alexander headed from Eastern Europe to Cape Town prepared by reading *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* in Yiddish, “the only book she could find that seemed to her to be vaguely relevant to her [new] homeland.” Eugene Dennis of CPUSA posted by Communist International to South Africa in the 1930s: “His supervision of the South African party was protracted.” British CP paid for printing of journals that their South African comrades then smuggled into the country. Soviet Communists providing \$30,000 subsidy to South Africa comrades by early 1960s. By the late 1980s, the African National Congress was getting \$100,000 annually from Moscow that was “more than matched” by Stockholm—where admittedly the BPP had close ties—which from 1973 on was granting \$200,000 to \$1 million annually.

6. *Los Angeles Times*, 18 August 2023.

Riders" in Australia: 30 college students from Sydney had embarked on a 2300-kilometer bus tour of northern New South Wales, deemed to be the "most significant act in Aboriginal-European relations," unwinding as their peers in Dixie were doing the same.⁷ Yet in 1981, when L.A. City Councilman Robert Farrell contacted Robert and Helen Singleton in an attempt to honor "Freedom Riders" in Dixie who "began their trips south from Los Angeles,"⁸ they were only able to find a third of these valiant protesters.⁹ Instead of being honored as being part of the "Greatest Generation" who had courageously stared into the abyss, most had disappeared from the pages of history, a testament to how their sacrifice was treated so shabbily by the gatekeepers. The broad-shouldered, dark-skinned Singleton, he of the thinning hair on his pate, acknowledged with a comrade that during those tense times, "if you weren't scared, you were crazy."¹⁰

Angelenos had reason to be "scared" without leaving the city limits, for they had to continue to confront the fearsome LAPD. A notable example of their ferocity occurred in June 1990 when rank-and-file members of the Service Employees International Union, Local 399 had taken their "Justice for Janitors" campaign involving striking workers to Century City, the concrete megalopolis on the westside. Cops brutally attacked peaceful demonstrators, resulting in two women losing their babies, scores hospitalized, and dozens arrested. Therein could be glimpsed retrospectively what had befallen past Communists and Panthers and those in their orbit.¹¹

Reconciliation of a different sort occurred at Balboa Park in San Diego in the fall of 2022. One hundred attended, some with sympathies to the Panthers, others firmly in the corner of Karenga, as they buried the hatchet and pointed the finger of accusation at the FBI for the bloodshed of decades past.¹²

7. Report, 13 September 2005, Box 2, Robert Singleton Papers.

8. Farrell to the Singletons, 14 October 1981, Box 2, Robert Singleton Papers.

9. Farrell to the Singletons, 14 January 1987, Box 2, Robert Singleton Papers.

10. *New York Times*, 10 November 2001.

11. Donna Murch, "Toward a Working Class History of the Long 1980s," *Journal of African American History*, 108 (No. 3, Summer 2023): 425-446, 443.

12. *San Diego Union Tribune*, 22 October 2022: They were burying the hatchet in light of what had occurred decades earlier when BPP member John Savage was shot and killed while standing on the corner of Imperial Avenue and 30th St. A week later the local headquarters of Karenga's forces was peppered with gunfire. Then the latter's comrade, Joseph Whaley, was shot and wounded while walking with a friend on 33rd St.; then Sylvester Bell of the BPP was shot fatally while selling the party organ in a parking lot near where Whaley had been wounded. A contemporaneous FBI memo pointed with pride to the outcome: "Shootings, beatings and a high degree of unrest continues to prevail in the ghetto area of Southeast San Diego. Although no specific counter-intelligence action can be credited with contributing to this overall situation, it is felt that a substantial amount of the unrest is directly attributable to this program." *Los Angeles Times*, 4 January 1976: FBI "claimed credit in 1969 for San Diego ghetto war." *The Black Panther*, 20 December 1975: FBI takes credit for 1969 murder of Panther Sylvester Bell in San Diego. Reprint of FBI memo of 18 September 1969. See edition of 13 December 1975: "FBI Set up Karenga Murder of BPP leaders."

Also in San Diego, Harold Brown, a CORE leader later exiled in Southern Africa,¹³ had returned to this border town and had done quite well financially. He had served as a banker on Wall Street and Associate Dean of the Business School at San Diego State University, and even as a de facto member of the city elite as president of the Holiday Bowl, a college football extravaganza.¹⁴ There were other Blacks in his elevated category, able to flourish as the U.S. ruling class bent and admitted some Negroes into the lower levels of the highest rank, as a way to palliate African Americans more generally. But how could this trend last when what had helped to propel it in the first instance—militancy allied with the BPP and CP internationalism allied with a now disappeared Soviet Union—was defunct or wounded? There was another trend on the wane too, rarely addressed but confronted by Harvey Schecter of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, when he upbraided *L.A. Times* writer Robert Scheer—once a kind of hype man for Cleaver before landing on his feet as a journalist within the mainstream. With utter contempt, he instructed Scheer's supervisor that the progressive reporter had "obvious nostalgic warm feelings about a time when larger numbers of Jews were Socialists." The tragedy was that Schecter too should have recognized that the retreat of "Jews [that] were Socialists"¹⁵ upset the political balance, allowing for the rise of a right wing with more than an iota of anti-Jewish fervor.

But as ever, class struggle and Black Liberation are not easy to suppress indefinitely. By mid-2023 one analyst adjudged accurately that "Southern California unions and the working people they represent have become the vanguard of the American labor movement. About half of the big strikes in the U.S. this year," said historian Nelson Lichtenstein, "have taken place in California with the most consequential centered in Los Angeles." This city was portrayed accurately as a "cockpit of labor militancy" as the "City of Angels is setting the pace for millions of working people across the nation."¹⁶ How true. And, predictably, the descendants of the unpaid sector of the working class remained the most pro-union bloc within the class as a whole—and that too boded well. More than this, this hopeful trend was a concrete legacy of the militant struggles spearheaded by the CP and the BPP in particular.

13. Interestingly, just as Brown had fled to Lesotho, Robert Singleton of UCLA had sought exile in what is now Zimbabwe: Robert Singleton to Philip Bell of Rockefeller Foundation, 3 April 1963, Box 2, Robert Singleton Papers.

14. *Daily Aztec*, 25 October 1985, and clipping, ca. 1997, Box 2 & 3, Harold Brown Papers.

15. Schecter to William F. Thomas, editor of *L.A. Times*, 2 February 1978, Box 1, Anti-Defamation League Collection, SDSU. Cf. David Horowitz, *Radical Son: A Generational Odyssey*, New York: Free Press, 1997.

16. *Los Angeles Times*, 16 July 2023.

Abbreviations

Universities and Institutions:

- AAMLO: African-American Museum and Library at Oakland
Claremont Colleges, Claremont, Calif.
CSA: California State Archives, Sacramento
CSU-Dominguez Hills: California State University-Dominguez Hills
CSU-Fullerton: California State University-Fullerton
CSU-Long Beach: California State University-Long Beach
CSU-LA: California State University-Los Angeles
CSU-Northridge: California State University-Northridge
CSU-Sacramento: California State University-Sacramento
Harvard: Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
Huntington Library: Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif.
LC: Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
NARA-College Park, Md.: National Archives and Records Administration,
College Park, Md.
NARA-Riverside: National Archives and Records Administration, Riverside,
Calif.
NARA-Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration,
Washington, D.C.
NPL: Niebyl-Procter Library, Oakland
NYPL: New York Public Library
NYU: New York University
Presidential Materials Project-RNPL
RNPL: Richard Nixon Presidential Library, Yorba Linda, Calif.
RRPL: Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, Simi Valley, Calif.
San Diego History Center
SDSU: San Diego State University.
SFPL: San Francisco Public Library
SFSU: San Francisco State University
SJSU: San Jose State University
TAMU: Texas A&M University, College Station
UCB: University of California-Berkeley
UC-Irvine: University of California-Irvine
UCLA: University of California-Los Angeles
UC-Riverside: University of California-Riverside
UCSB: University of California-Santa Barbara

UCSC: University of California-Santa Cruz

UCSD: University of California-San Diego

USC: University of Southern California

Collections:

(Note: The following list also includes several sources, particularly oral histories, and collections of papers, not cited or abbreviated.)

ACLU Records-UCLA: Records of American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California-UCLA

Deacon Alexander, Oral History: Deacon Alexander, Oral History, 14 August 2019, CSU-Northridge

Joseph Alioto Papers: Joseph Alioto Papers, SFPL

Anti-Defamation League Collection, SDSU

Bettina Aptheker Papers, UCSC

Bernard Arafat, Oral History: Bernard Arafat, Oral History, 29 December 2020, CSU-Northridge

Archives of SFSU Alumni: Archives of San Francisco State University Alumni, SFSU

Richard Arnason, Oral History, 2008, UCB

Beverly Axelrod Papers: Beverly Axelrod Papers-University of Delaware

Herman Baca Papers: Herman Baca Papers-UCSD

Gilbert Benjamin Papers: Gilbert Benjamin Papers, CSU-Northridge

David Bernstein Papers-UCLA

Arthur Bierman Papers: Arthur Bierman Papers, SFSU

BLA Vertical File: BLA Vertical File, Freedom Archives-Berkeley, Calif.

Black Panther Documents: Black Panther Documents-TAMU

BPP Harlem Records: Records of Black Panther Party-Harlem Branch, Schomburg Center, NYPL

Black Studies and Chicano Studies Center Records, Claremont Colleges

J. Herman Blake Papers: J. Herman Blake Papers, UCSC

Fletcher Bowron Papers: Fletcher Bowron Papers, Huntington Library

Tom Bradley Administrative Papers, UCLA

Archie Brown Papers, SFSU

Harold Brown Papers: Harold Brown Papers, SDSU

Central Records Collection, UC-Irvine

Chancellor Subject Files: Chancellor Subject Files, UCSD

Robert Chandler Collection: Robert Chandler Collection on Student Activism, UC-Riverside

Civil Case Files: *Dorothy R. Healey v. James Boyle, U.S. Marshal, Habeas Corpus*. RG 21, Records of the District Court of the U.S. for the Southern

District of California, Central Division, 1938-1961, Civil Case Files,
 NARA-Riverside
 Cleaver Papers-UCB: Eldridge Cleaver Papers: UC Berkeley
 Cleaver-TAMU: Eldridge Cleaver Archives, Texas A&M University
 Coalition Against Police Abuse Papers: Southern California Library for Social
 Studies and Research, Los Angeles
 Collection on Race: Collection on Race, Ethnicity and Student Activism, UC-
 Riverside
 Darman Commons Papers, CSU-Dominguez Hills
 Communist Party Files, NARA-Washington, D.C.
 CPUSA Records-NYU: CPUSA Records, New York University
 CRC Papers: CRC Papers, Southern California Library for Social Studies and
 Research, Los Angeles
 CSA: California State Archives, Sacramento
 CUAC Records: Records of the California Un-American Activities Committee,
 CSA
 Angela Davis Case Collection-CSUS: Angela Davis Case Collection, CSU-
 Sacramento
 Angela Davis Collected Materials-UCLA: Collected Materials about Angela
 Davis-UCLA
 Angela Davis Collection-Claremont: Angela Davis Collection, Claremont
 Colleges, Calif.
 Angela Davis File-NPL: Angela Davis File, Niebyl-Procter Library, Oakland
 Angela Davis Legal Defense Collection: Angela Davis Legal Defense
 Collection, Schomburg Center, Harlem, NYPL
 Angela Davis Papers-Harvard: Angela Davis Papers, Harvard University-
 Cambridge, Mass.
 John Dean Papers-RNPL: White House Special Files, John Dean Papers, RNPL
 Karen Dellenbach, Oral History, October 2009, Box 2, Los Angeles Resistance
 Collection-LAPL
 Julian Dixon Papers: Julian Dixon Papers, CSU-LA
 Ben Dobbs, Oral History: Ben Dobbs, Oral History, 1987, UCLA
 B. Kwaku Duren Papers: B. Kwaku Duren Papers, University of Southern
 California
 Mervyn Dymally Papers: Mervyn Dymally Papers, CSU-LA
 Harry Edwards Papers: Harry Edwards Papers, SJSU
 John Ehrlichman Papers-RNPL
 Robert Elliott Papers: Robert Elliott Papers-UCSD
 FBI File: SNCC-Duke: FBI File: SNCC, Duke University-Durham, N.C.
 Cecil Ferguson, Oral History, 1990-92, UCLA
 Leonard Garment Files, RNPL

Patrick Germany, Oral History: Patrick Germany, Oral History, 15 July 2018, San Diego History Center
 Governor's Papers-RRPL: Governor's Papers, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, Simi Valley, Calif.
 Joseph Gusfield Papers-UCSD
 Gwartney Collection: Gwartney American Legion and Anticommunism Collection, SDSU
 Kenneth Hahn Papers: Kenneth Hahn Papers, Huntington Library
 Wilbert Hauser, Oral History: Wilbert Hauser, Oral History, 1 August 2018, San Diego History Center
 Harry Hay Papers: Harry Hay Papers, SFPL
 S.I. Hayakawa, Oral History, 6 April 1988, SFSU
 Dorothy Healey, April 1957 Report: Report by Dorothy Healey to the Southern California District of the CP, 13-14 April 1957, Box 4, Series II, Gilbert Benjamin Papers
 Dorothy Healey, Oral History: Dorothy Healey, Oral History, 1972-1974, UCLA
 Dorothy Healey Papers, CSU-Long Beach
 Dorothy Healey Papers, UCLA
 Fred Hirsch Collection: Fred Hirsch Collection, SJSU
 Thomas Horne, Oral History: Thomas Horne, Oral History, 18 August 2018, San Diego History Center
 HUAC Records: Communist Party Files, Records of House Committee on Un-American Activities, NARA-Washington, D.C.
 Hudson, Oral History: H. Claude Hudson, Oral History, 29 November 1966, CSU-Fullerton
 Joseph Henry Johnson and Ayuko Babu, Oral History, 18 October 2018, CSU-Northridge
 Donald Kalish Papers: Donald Kalish Papers-UCLA
 Ron Karenga, Oral History, 30 May 1976, CSU-Fullerton
 Harold Keen Papers, SDSU
 V.W. Kenaston Papers, San Diego History Center
 Dr. Jack Johnson Kimbrough, Oral History, 11 October 1990, San Diego History Center
 Harper Knowles Papers: Harper Knowles Papers, SFSU
 Kutnick Collection: Lisette and Sam Kutnick Abraham Lincoln Brigade Collection, SFSU
 Norman Leonard, Oral History: Norman Leonard, Oral History, 1985, UCB
 Norman Leonard Papers: Norman Leonard Papers, SFSU, Labor Archives and Research Center
 Almena Lomax, Oral History: Almena Lomax, Oral History, 27 December 1966, CSU-Fullerton

Los Angeles Resistance Collection, LAPL
 Hugh Manes Pepers, UCLA
 Ben Margolis, Oral History: Ben Margolis, Oral History, 1984-1985, UCLA
 Jorge Mariscal Papers-UCSD
 Valerie "Tamu" McFalls, Oral History, ca. 2021, CSU-Northridge
 William McGill, Oral History: William McGill Papers, UCSD-La Jolla
 William McGill Papers, UCSD-La Jolla
 Meserve and Scronce Collection: Harry Meserve and Marilyn Scronce
 Collection, SJSU
 Loren Miller, Oral History: Loren Miller, Oral History, 29 April 1967, CSU-
 Fullerton
 Loren Miller Papers: Loren Miller Papers, Huntington Library
 James Mills, Oral History, 23 July 1992, San Diego History Center
 Vesta Muehleisen Papers, San Diego History Center
 NAACP Papers-LC: NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
 NAACP Papers-UCB: NAACP Papers, UC Berkeley
 NAACP Papers-UCLA
 National Urban League Papers: National Urban League Papers, LC
 Newton Foundation: Huey P. Newton Foundation Records, Stanford University,
 Palo Alto, Calif.
 Noel/Harriman Papers: Frances Nacke Noel/Job Harriman Papers, Huntington
 Library
 Northern Student Movement Records, Schomburg Center-NYPL
 Roslyn Payne Collection: Roslyn Payne Collection of Black Panther Party FBI
 Files, NYU
 Walton Phillips Collection: Walton Phillips Pamphlet Collection, SFSU
 Ernest Preacely, Oral History, 8 February 2006, UCLA
 PW Research Files: People's World Research Files, SFSU
 Random House Records: Random House Records-Columbia University
 RCRICSP: Records of California Research Institute for Communist Strategy and
 Propaganda, USC
 Records of the CPUSA-LC: Records of the CPUSA, Library of Congress,
 Washington, D.C.
 Holland Roberts Papers: Holland Roberts Papers, SFSU
 San Francisco Employer Surveillance: San Francisco Employer Surveillance
 Reports on the Communist Party, SFSU Press
 Schneiderman Trial Records: Trial Records of William Schneiderman, UCLA
 Records of the District Court of the U.S. for the Southern District of California,
 Central Division...Criminal Case 21883, U.S.A. v. Schneiderman, et al..
 NARA-Riverside

Screened Files: "Screened for Exempted Material," Records of U.S. Attorneys,
 Central Judicial District of California...Selected Criminal Case Files, 1952-
 1991, NARA-Riverside

Robert Singleton Papers: Robert Singleton Papers, Loyola Marymount
 University, Los Angeles

Smith Act Trial Record: Records of the District Court of the U.S. for the
 Southern District of California Central Division, 1929-1938, Criminal Case
 21883, NARA-Riverside

Social Movements Collection: Social Movements Collection, Claremont
 Colleges

South L.A. 20th Century: South Los Angeles 20th Century Documentation
 Collection, Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research,
 Los Angeles

Harry Steinmetz, Oral History: Harry Steinmetz, Oral History, 12 October 1980,
 SDSU

Harry Steinmetz Papers: Harry Steinmetz Papers, SDSU

Student Unrest Subject Files: Office of Public Information, Isla Vista/Student
 Unrest Subject Files, UCSB

Subversive Activities Control Board Records: Records of the Subversive
 Activities Control Board, 1950-1972, NARA-College Park, Md.

Marnesba Tackett, Oral History, March-April 1984, UCLA

Ray Thompson, Oral History, 6 November 1978, SFPL

Thorne Papers: John Thorne Papers, UC Santa Cruz

Times Records: Records of New York Times Company, NYPL

Tocsin: Tocsin: The West's Leading Anticommunist Weekly, CSU-Fullerton

Robert E. Treuhaft Papers: Robert E. Treuhaft Papers, NYU

Trumbo Papers: Dalton Trumbo Papers, UCLA

United Professors of California Papers, SFSU

Harold Urey Papers: Harold Urey Papers-UCSD

USA v. Schneiderman, NARA-Riverside: Records of the District Court for the
 Southern District of California, Central Division...USA v. Schneiderman, et
 al., NARA-Riverside

Jerry Voorhis Papers: Jerry Voorhis Papers, Claremont Colleges Library

Ben Waddell, Oral History: Ben Waddell, Oral History, 10 December 2018, San
 Diego History Center

Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA: Governor Earl Warren Papers, CSA,
 Sacramento

Ron Wilkins, Oral History, CSU-Northridge

Ron Wilkins Papers: Ron Wilkins Papers, CSU-Dominguez Hills

Robert Carlton Wilson Papers: Robert Carlton Wilson Papers, SDSU

Bibliography of Works Cited

- Abdul-Jabbar, Kareem and Peter Knobler, *Giant Steps*, New York: Bantam, 1983
- Abt, John with Michael Myerson, *Advocate and Activist: Memoirs of an American Communist Lawyer*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995
- Alexander, Leslie. *Fear of a Black Republic: Haiti and the Birth of Black Internationalism in the United States*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2023
- Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Color-Blindness*, New York: New Press, 2010
- Alexander, Rustam. *Red Closet: The Hidden History of Gay Oppression in the USSR*, Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2023
- Alleg, Henri. *S.O.S. America*, Paris: Messidor-Temps Actuels, 1985
- Andrade, Ernest. *Unconquerable Rebel: Robert W. Wilcox and Hawaiian Politics, 1880-1903*, Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1996
- Andrews, Lori. *Black Power, White Blood: The Life and Times of Johnny Spain*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999
- Anthony, Earl. *The Time of the Furnaces: A Case Study of Black Student Revolt*, New York: Dial, 1971
- Aptheker, Bettina. *Communists in Closets: Queering the History, 1930s-1990s*, New York: Routledge, 2023
- *The Morning Breaks: The Trial of Angela Davis*, New York: International, 1975
- Aptheker, Herbert. *American Negro Slave Revolts*, New York: International, 2021
- *The American Revolution, 1763-1783; A History of the American People: An Interpretation*, New York: International, 1960
- *The Colonial Era: A History of the American People*, New York: International, 1959
- *Early Years of the Republic: From the End of the Revolution to the First Administration of Washington (1783-1793)*, New York: International, 1976
- *The Urgency of Marxist-Christian Dialogue: A Pragmatic Argument for Reconciliation*, New York: Harper Colophon, 1970
- Armstrong, Elisabeth B. *Bury the Corpse of Colonialism: The Revolutionary Feminist Conference of 1949*, Oakland: University of California Press, 2023
- Armstrong, Gregory. *"The Dragon Has Come"*: New York: Harper & Row, 1974
- Asante, Molefe. *Maulana Karenga: An Intellectual Portrait*, Cambridge [U.K.]: Polity, 2009

- Aziz, M. "Vanguard of the Athletic Revolution: The Black Panther Party, Micki and Jack Scott and the Sports Liberation Movement," *American Quarterly*, 75 (No. 3, September 2023)
- Baldwin, James. *Collected Essays*, New York: Library of America, 1998
- Bass, Charlotta. *Forty Years: Memoirs from the Pages of a Newspaper*, Los Angeles: Bass, 1960
- Bateman, David A., et al. *Southern Nation: Congress and White Supremacy After Reconstruction*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018
- Beck, Robert. *The Naked Soul of Iceberg Slim*, Los Angeles: Holloway House, 1971
- Belafonte, Harry. *My Song: A Memoir*, New York: Knopf, 2011
- Bernstein, Shana Beth. "Building Bridges at Home in a Time of Global Conflict: Interracial Cooperation and the Fight for Civil Rights in Los Angeles, 1933-1954," Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 2003
- Bevins, Vincent. *The Jakarta Method: Washington's Anticommunist Crusade and the Mass Murder Program that Shaped Our World*, New York: PublicAffairs, 2020
- Blackhawk, Ned. *The Rediscovery of America: Native Peoples and the Unmaking of U.S. History*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2023
- Bloom, Joshua and Waldo E. Martin, Jr., *Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016
- Brent, William Lee. *Long Time Gone*, New York: Times Books, 1996
- Briggs, Cyril, ed. *The African Blood Brotherhood*, New York: Garland, 1987
- Brown, Elaine. *A Taste of Power: A Black Woman's Story*, New York: Pantheon, 1992
- Brown, Harold K. "Hal." *Fighting the Color Monster: My Struggle to Overcome Racism*, San Diego: Montezuma, 2019
- Brown, Scot. *Fighting for US: Maulana Karenga, the US Organization and Black Cultural Nationalism*, New York: New York University Press, 2003
- Buelna, Enrique M. *Chicano Communists and the Struggle for Social Justice*, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2019
- Bugliosi, Vincent and Curt Gentry. *Helter Skelter: The True Story of the Manson Murders*, New York: Norton, 1974
- Bukhari, Safiya. *The War Before: The True Life Story of Becoming a Black Panther, Keeping the Faith in Prison and Fighting for Those Left Behind*, New York: Feminist Press, 2010
- Burton, Orisanmi. *Tip of the Spear: Black Radicalism, Prison Repression and the Long Attica Revolt*, Oakland: University of California Press, 2023
- Campbell, Marne. *Making Black Los Angeles: Class, Gender and Community, 1859-1919*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016

- Capozzola, Christopher. *Bound by War: How the United States and the Philippines Built America's First Pacific Century*, New York: Basic, 2019
- Chapman, Gerald W. *Edmund Burke: The Practical Imagination*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967
- Chard, Daniel S. *Nixon's War at Home: The FBI, Leftist Guerrillas and the Origins of Counterterrorism*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021
- Chimurenga, Thandusuzwe, ed. *Some of Us Are Brave: Interviews and Conversations with Sistas in Life and Struggle*, Wakefield, Quebec: Daraja, 2023
- Churchill, Ward and Jim VanderWall, eds. *Agents of Repression: The FBI's Secret War Against the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement*, Baltimore: Black Classic, 2022
- *The COINTELPRO Papers: Documents from the FBI's Secret Wars Against Dissent in the U.S.*, Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 2022
- Cleaver, Eldridge. "On Lumpen Ideology," *Black Scholar*, 4 (No. 3, November-December 1972)
- *Soul on Ice*, New York: McGraw Hill, 1968
- *Target Zero: A Life in Writing* [ed. by Kathleen Cleaver], New York: Palgrave, 2006
- Clemons, Michael L. and Charles E. Jones, "Global Solidarity: The Black Panther Party in the International Arena," *New Political Science*, 21 (No. 2, 1999)
- Cobb, Jr., Charles E. *This Non-Violent Stuff Will Get You Killed: How Guns Made the Civil Rights Movement Possible*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2015
- Cobb, W. Mark, et al., eds. *Herbert Marcuse: A Critical Reader*, New York: Routledge, 2004
- Cochran, Johnnie with David Fisher, *A Lawyer's Life*, New York: St. Martin's, 2003
- Coll, Steve. *The Achilles Trap: Saddam Hussein, the CIA and the Origins of America's Invasion of Iraq*, New York: Penguin, 2024
- Collected Works of the Black Liberation Army*, Vol. I, Brooklyn?, Rookery, 2023
- Crompton, Louis. *Homosexuality and Civilization*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006
- Crowe, Daniel. *Prophets of Rage: The Black Freedom Struggle in San Francisco*, New York: Garland, 2000
- Cummins, Eric. *The Rise and Fall of California's Radical Prison Movement*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994
- Dallek, Matthew. *Birchers: How the John Birch Society Radicalized the American Right*, New York: Basic, 2022

- Davis, Angela. *An Autobiography*, Chicago: Haymarket, 2021
- Davis, Mike and Jon Wiener, *Set the Night on Fire: L.A. in the Sixties*, New York: Verso, 2021
- Debray, Régis. *Revolution in the Revolution? Armed Struggle and Political Struggle in Latin America*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1967
- Dennis, Peggy. *The Autobiography of an American Communist: A Personal View of a Political Life, 1925-1975*, Westport, Conn.: Lawrence Hill, 1977
- D'Eramo, Marco. "Capital's Militant," *New Left Review*, 26 April 2023
- Du Bois, W.E.B. *John Brown*, New York: International, 2021
- Durden-Smith, Jo. "The Last One Home: Requiem for a Mass Movement," *California*, January 1985
- *Who Killed George Jackson? Fantasies, Paranoia and the Revolution*, New York: Knopf, 1976
- Ehrenreich, Barbara. *The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment*, New York: Anchor, 1983
- Endore, Guy, *The Sleepy Lagoon Mystery*, Los Angeles: Sleepy Lagoon Defense Committee, 1944
- Friedrich Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, Scotts Valley, Calif.: CreateSpace, 2015
- Faderman, Lillian and Stuart Timmons, *Gay L.A.: A History of Sexual Outlaws, Power Politics and Lipstick Lesbians*, New York: Perseus, 2006
- Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*, New York: Grove, 2005
- Faraj, Gaidi. *Unearthing the Underground: A Study of Radical Activism in the Black Panther Party and the Black Liberation Army*, Berkeley: University of California, 2007
- Farmer, Ashley. *Remaking Black Power: How Black Women Transformed an Era*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017
- Felker-Kantor, Max. *Policing Los Angeles: Race, Resistance and the Rise of the LAPD*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018
- Foner, Philip S. "Reverend George Washington Woodbey: Early Twentieth Century Black Socialist," *Journal of Negro History*, 61 (No. 2, 1976)
- Forman, James. *The Making of Black Revolutionaries*, Seattle: Open Hand, 1990
- Fournier, Louis. *FLQ: The Anatomy of an Underground Movement*: Toronto: NC Press, 1984
- García, Mario T. *Memories of Chicano History: The Life and Narrative of Bert Corona*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994
- Garment, Leonard. *Crazy Rhythm: My Journey from Brooklyn, Jazz and Wall Street to Nixon's White House, Watergate and Beyond*, New York: Times, 1997
- Garry, Charles and Art Goldberg, *Streetfighter in the Courtroom: The People's Advocate*, New York: Dutton, 1977

- Gates, Daryl F. with Diane K. Shah, *Chief: My Life in the LAPD*, New York: Bantam, 1992
- Gettleman, Marvin. "'No Varsity Teams': New York's Jefferson School of Social Science, 1943-1956," *Science & Society*, 66 (No. 3, Fall 2002)
- Gifford, Justin. *Revolution or Death: The Life of Eldridge Cleaver*, Chicago: Lawrence Hill, 2020
- *Street Poison: The Biography of Iceberg Slim*, New York: Doubleday, 2015
- Grathwohl, Larry. *Bringing Down America: An FBI Informer with the Weathermen*, New Rochelle: Arlington House, 1976
- Hager, Thomas. *Force of Nature: The Life of Linus Pauling*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995
- Halisi, Imamu Clyde. "Maulan Karenga: Black Leader in Captivity," *Black Scholar*, May 1972
- Hamm, Theodore. *Rebel and a Cause: Caryl Chessman and the Politics of the Death Penalty in Postwar California, 1948-1974*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001
- Harris, Malcolm. *Palo Alto: A History of California, Capitalism and the World*, New York: Little Brown, 2023
- Haslam, Gerald W. with Janice E. Haslam, *In Thought and Action: The Enigmatic Life of S.I. Hayakawa*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011
- Hassan, Amina. *Loren Miller: Civil Rights Attorney and Journalist*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015
- Hayden, Tom. *Irish on the Inside: In Search of the Soul of Irish America*, New York: Verso, 2003
- Haynes, John Earl and Harvey Klehr, Venona: Decoding Soviet Espionage in America, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999
- Healey, Dorothy and Maurice Isserman, *Dorothy Healey Remembers: A Life in the Communist Party*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1990
- Heath, G. Louis, ed. *The Black Panther Leaders Speak: Huey Newton, Bobby Seale, Eldridge Cleaver and Company Speak Out Through the Black Panther Party's Official Newspaper*, Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1976
- Hernon, Peter. *A Terrible Thunder: The Story of the New Orleans Sniper*, New Orleans: Garrett County Press, 2005
- Hernon, Calvin. *Sex and Racism in America*, New York: Grove Press, 1966
- Hilliard, David and Lewis Cole, *This Side of Glory: The Autobiography of David Hilliard and the Story of the Black Panther Party*, Boston: Little, Brown, 1993
- Hix, John D. "The Political Evolution of Eldridge Cleaver," M.A., CSU-Dominguez Hills, 1995
- Horne, Gerald. *Black and Brown: African-Americans and the Mexican Revolution, 1910-1920*, New York: New York University, 2005